No. 6

BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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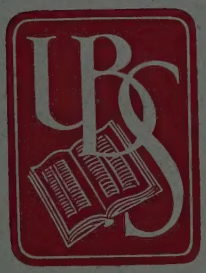

1951

SECOND QUARTER

146, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

A WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE SOCIETIES.

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

SECOND QUARTER - 1951

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*Translated into English by BERYL GUY

Editorial

THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES celebrates this spring the fifth anniversary of its foundation. In May, 1946, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society called together delegates from some ten Bible Societies and a number of representatives of the churches for a conference to plan more powerful and more co-ordinated action in the distribution of the Scriptures throughout the world. The basis of this new world organisation was agreed upon and soon afterwards, the U.B.S. had become a reality.

This decisive step was actually the last of many moves in this direction which had been taking place in the previous decades ; indeed, co-ordination between various national Bible Societies had been developing throughout the whole of the first half of the present century. The " missionary " Bible Societies, the American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland and the Netherlands Bible Society, had felt the necessity of avoiding overlapping and of co-ordinating their policies in regard to prices, colportage and editions. Geographical spheres of activity were defined : Japan, Brazil and Persia were divided between the A.B.S. and the B.F.B.S. ; later, Joint Agencies, administered by the one Society or the other, were formed in the Bible Lands, South America, China, Malaya and Indonesia, some of which have since become independent national Bible Societies.

Eventually, as the value of these contacts between Bible Societies and the necessity for them being maintained regularly became more and more apparent, in 1939, at the invitation of the Netherlands Bible Society on the occasion of its 125th anniversary, representatives of the four " missionary " Bible Societies and of the French and Norwegian Bible Societies met in Holland and decided to " extend their policy of working together " and to form a " Council of Bible Societies " with practically the same purpose and functions as those which, seven years later, were made the basis of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Unfortunately, the war intervened in this scheme and prevented the new Council from going into action. But World War II also served to demonstrate the increasing realisation that the world is *one* world and that all nations and all world problems are interdependent. One outcome of this increasing sense of interdependency was the setting up of the United Nations Organisation and its satellite world organisms. And even now, when this oneness seems to be torn in two, the U.N.O. still stands as the symbol of a vision, of a hope. At the same time, the war and post-war periods made the absolute necessity for closer co-operation between Bible Societies increasingly evident. Bible Society agencies had been cut off from their headquarters—European agencies from London, Indonesia from Amsterdam—and had had to be supplied from elsewhere ; stocks of Scriptures had been exhausted, paper was scarce, printing facilities were limited and all these facts called for common planning. Prisoners of war in Europe and later refugees urgently needed Scriptures : an agency was created in Geneva at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches and through this channel supplies were sent to the camps, demonstrating the value of an international organisation under cover of which the work could be continued in cases of emergency.

So in May, 1946, at " Elfinsward," Haywards Heath, the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES came into being to realise a vision of a world-wide fellowship of Bible Societies, within which there would be an increasing co-operation and mutual planning and a general deepening of the sense of responsibility for the world-wide work. National Societies, hitherto active only within their own borders, have as a result begun already to show a concern for the work outside. The Scandinavian Societies have raised funds to help the German Societies which were so badly crippled by the war, and they are now turning their eyes to the needy areas of Africa and Asia. Moreover, in order to encourage a sense of local responsibility, indigenous Societies have been created to carry on the work formerly handled by one or another of the " missionary " Bible Societies. Every meeting of the Council or Standing Committee sees a new

step forward, a new clarification of policies and principles and a strengthening of the links which bind the individual members in the common task.

Although it has been recognised and stated from the beginning that the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES is not a "Super-Bible Society," planning and co-ordination through the U.B.S. might well bring with it the danger of undue centralisation. And yet the creation of new Bible Societies in areas where previously only agencies of the larger Bible Societies were at work is in itself a powerful deterrent to centralisation and in the reverse sense, as it were, increases the need for and the importance of the U.B.S. as the means of co-ordination, as a link which helps to keep together these national Societies which might otherwise be tempted or led by the present circumstances to go their own way and become involved in their own problems and thus lose sight of the world task in which they are all engaged.

Five years have elapsed since the powerful vision of the co-ordinated activity of all Bible Societies throughout the world on the common field, in the one task, was placed before our eyes. Like any true vision, it was a view for the future ; it was the victory which had to be won, laid down by the general staff. During these five years, we have had to work out the vision and to progress, step by step. Some problems have been solved, many remain ; some positions have been taken, others still have to be won and many other forces need to be brought on to the battle-field. But the vision remains and is ever before us.

*

As may have been noticed from the past issues of the BULLETIN, the fields of research and interest which concern the Bible Societies are numerous and varied. Distribution and colportage, translation, production, literacy, evangelism, mutual help, Scriptures for the blind, publicity, co-operation with ecclesiastical or missionary movements or organisms—all of these fall within the scope of the activity of the Bible Societies and consequently of the U.B.S. In this issue we introduce two main concerns of the Bible Societies which have not so far been dealt with in this periodical.

The problem of revising translations which are still cherished in Christian circles, but which have become less and less understandable to the man in the street, has become most pressing for almost all the European languages. In most of these the Bible was first translated in the sixteenth or seventeenth century and these translations have been embodied in part in the hymnology and liturgy of the churches of various denominations which have developed since the Reformation ; moreover, in many cases, these translations have been of paramount importance in the history of the language, the best known examples of this being the Luther Bible and the Authorised Version. These translations badly need revision, if the Bible is again to be read and understood outside of the Church. Revision is now proceeding in a number of languages : English, German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, Slovak, Hungarian, Russian, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, and this list is not complete. Professor Pákozdy, Professor of Biblical Theology and General History of Religion at the Reformed Theological Faculty of the University of Debrecen, gives us in this issue a detailed description of the work now going on in Hungary and we find echoes of the revision work which is proceeding in Brazil and Argentina in the article by the Rev. W. J. Bradnock, Translations Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who recently visited those two countries together with the Rev. Dr. E. A. Nida, Secretary for Versions of the American Bible Society.

Both are on the Editorial Board of our other U.B.S. review, "THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR" which is exclusively concerned with that aspect of Bible Society work.

Another common concern of the Bible Societies is that of publicity. This has as its obvious aim the collection of the necessary funds for the pursuit and development of the work. The "missionary" Bibles Societies have their 'Home Secretary,' whose responsibility it is to keep the supporters of the society informed and to increase their number. But collecting money is not the only aim. Just as in many missionary circles to-day, it is now felt that the Bible Societies—like the missionary societies—have a home duty (besides that of providing the Scriptures needed in the country); they have an evangelistic responsibility and, alongside of the churches and home missions, they have to interest the people in the Bible, its content and its history, its reading and its study. Pastor Visser, the Home Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, has been particularly active along this line and we are glad to be introduced through his article to a special aspect of this "publicity" activity among school children.

No comments are needed on the other articles in this issue. Each brings us face to face with our responsibilities and helps us to see something of the immensity of the task which lies before us. But we are not only called to be active and to support activity. In the sermon which he preached in Vienna on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the work of the B.F.B.S. in Austria, Bishop Berggrav—our President—reminds us that the Bible is the Word of God and the Word of God to us here and now. And because the Bible is the Word of God, we want it to be circulated amongst all the inhabitants of the earth and read and studied by them. We want . . . . . no! Jesus Christ gives us this task.

SITUATIONS MAKE THE BIBLE COME TO LIFE

EIVIND BERGGRAV

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. (Rom. 1 : 16)

THE Bible is not the Word of God in the sense that I can simply hand out the book and say: "Here is the Word of God." But if the Bible speaks into a living, human *situation*, then men will hear the Word of God. And if the Bible speaks into *your* situation, then *you* will hear the voice of God directed to you through His Word.

Let us consider the condition mentioned in our text—the matter of being ashamed of the Gospel. Have any of you ever been ashamed of the Gospel? I have. It happened like this: At school, I entirely lost the faith of my childhood under the influence of the evolutionary teaching. I was at that time a very young and proud 'free-thinker.' Then one day a friend said to me: "You ought to read the New Testament." Of course, I smiled at this suggestion. I was far beyond that. Again she said: "Just try it, the best would be to start with the letter to the Romans." Now, all intelligent people will say that was a silly idea, for one should certainly *not* begin with the letter to the Romans. Fortunately, I did not know that at the time and I did begin with the letter to the Romans. When I came to the above verse, it was like

a thunderbolt striking me. For that was just my condition : I was ashamed. At that time I would not have wanted my comrades to see that I was reading the Bible, and I was very glad that I was alone in my room, where nobody could see me. And there this Word came to me and told me that I was ashamed and I had to admit that it was true. That was a real, actual situation and it was the first time that the Bible became the Word of God to me. When something like that happens, then the Word becomes insistent and demands an answer. My answer was " yes." Later in life, the same thing has often happened to me, that my situation has coincided with the Word of God and thus the voice of God has come to me through the Bible.

Then it says in this verse that the Word of God is a power. The Word of God *is* a power. I have been impressed by the many foreign-sounding names mentioned in Luke 3:1-2. They are the princes of the world, the rulers of that time : *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiphas being the high priests* . . . all these names are listed and then come the words which struck me : *the Word of God came.* That stands out livingly and vividly in my imagination—all the then famous names are lined up, standing there very respectfully to allow the Word of God to march on—for then *the Word of God came.* That is what we have often experienced in our lives, the Word of God simply marches into our situation, into our life.

You in Austria, and we in Norway have been through many similar experiences, although they may sometimes have differed during the difficult years. Let me tell you about another experience of the Word of God coming to me. You know that Norway was invaded on 9th April, 1940, and I confess quite frankly that I was very bewildered. We looked around on all sides, wondering what would happen, what we should do. Many were expecting the English to come to our rescue. There was even a rumour that they would come on a certain day at 12 o'clock and that there would be a great battle for Oslo. There was panic in the city. I had a meeting of my pastors and we knelt down on the floor of the church and prayed. Then I asked the pastors : " Has any one of you received a Word from God which he could pass on to me ? " An old friend of my student days opened his Bible and said : " I have had this verse from Isaiah 41:10, *Fear not and look not anxiously around thee, for I am thy God*" (according to the Norwegian translation). Again it was if a thunderbolt had struck me. I had been " looking anxiously around," not knowing whether to turn hither or thither. The Word came to me so quietly through my friend, but it had a mighty effect on me, in this situation it was the Word of God to me. The following Sunday this was the experience of the whole Norwegian people when they opened their Bibles. We have prescribed texts for our sermons and it was like an electric current going through our churches that day when we heard the Word of John 14:1, *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* We need to be startled to understand what it means for such a Word to come to a fearful soul. This Word went through us like a ray of sunshine and thus Jesus spoke into the very serious situation of that time.

Sometimes the Word comes as softly as the dew. At other times it is like a flaming sword. It may even come with a humorous touch. When I was in prison and the German guards had to bring me my food, one day I received two cutlets in a small packet from a Norwegian farmer. According to instructions, the chief guard had to open all parcels. As he was standing

beside me, opening the packet, the Bible was at my side and was open at the 23rd Psalm. As the contents of the packet were revealed, I showed to the guard the verse : *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.* Then he had to smile and said : "An extraordinary book ! " (This experience brought us closer to one another, but the rest of the story does not belong here.) So the Word of God can also come into a particular situation in our life in a humorous way. There are no limits whatsoever to the possibilities of the Word of God.

On the first Sunday of the year 1942, I was allowed to write a legitimate letter to my wife and in it I mentioned the text for that day. I wrote : " I am very moved to read in our text, *He hath sent me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives . . . . .*" (Luke 4:18). This letter of mine was censored by the Chief of Police in Oslo, who then called my wife up before him. (She was not allowed to receive my letters herself, but could only read them in his office and then had to hand them back to him). The Chief of Police said to her : " I order you to write to your husband and tell him that from now onwards he is forbidden to quote the Bible, for *it is much too up-to-date* ! " That is also an experience, to receive the testimony of an enemy that the Bible is up-to-date.

The same thing happened to me when I was arrested the first time and I was told in my study that the Gestapo car was waiting for me outside. A young lawyer was with me at the time and at first we were paralysed, but then as I went calmly down the stairs, my young friend called out to me : " Eivind, on the way you must read I Peter 3: 13-15." As I was sitting in the car between two police officers, I pulled out my New Testament which I always carry with me, turning up the above-mentioned text and read : *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye : and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled : But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts . . . . .* As I read that, I was suddenly no longer in the Gestapo car, but in the arms of God and in all my life I have never sanctified Christ as Lord in my heart in the way that I did then. The Word of God has accompanied me all the hours of my life and has always triumphed in every situation. Even the great powers of the world are small and helpless as against the Word of God.

It was really quite strange how our position in Norway at that time made the Bible, so to speak, into a ' walking Bible.' You could meet it in a living way in the street. People read the Bible a great deal and complete strangers would come up to me in the street and say : " Excuse me, Bishop, but I have had this Word to-day and I must pass it on to you . . . . ." And so suddenly, in the street, I had the experience of God speaking to me through a neighbour, or through a complete stranger. And the many written greetings I received were often accompanied by a verse from the Bible, so that the Bible was springing up amongst us and speaking in a living way. The Bible is not meant to be a closed book, but to live in hearts and on lips. You should be the Word of God to your neighbour, to your friend, to your colleague. The Bible must come into your life, only then will the Word of God open up to us.

But then in Romans 1:16 it says that the Gospel is the power of God *unto salvation.* I wonder how many of you have experienced this salvation through the Word of God ? This happens when our inmost being is quickened and we simply have to confess that we are terrible people and do not belong to God and that if He is just, He must thrust us from Himself. We call it

sin. I might also call it our shame. When we are honestly ashamed before God, that is the most serious situation to which we can come. But then, when we find that through the Word of God, the voice of God, the voice of Jesus, comes to us and says : *Arise, my son, thy sins are forgiven,* then it is quite unbelievable. I confess to you, that it is hard to believe that God could really forgive a sinner like myself. That seems nonsense. But this nonsense is just the good sense of God and that becomes living and believable to me through the Word of God. I am particularly fond of that verse which tells us that *Christ died for us while we were yet sinners* (Rom. 5:8). When this Word speaks to me and tells me that I shall be justified if I surrender myself to Christ, then there is a revolution in my life. Something quite new springs up and becomes reality. I am then in the sight of God a sinner to whom has been shown the grace of God. His Word has made that completely sure and believable. His Word is a rock. God speaks directly to me and then I experience the power which can save. That grips my life more and more.

Dear Friends, we are all agreed that this is a time of anxiety and pressure. I only ask myself : If I feel like that, am I not really being unfaithful to the real meaning of my life ? Are not my sins forgiven ? If I—unbelievably—have forgiveness of sins, then what more can the powers of the world threaten me ? I have sensed that you have here in Austria a situation that is not very clear. But I believe this Word from Isaiah is also spoken to our present time : *Fear not and look not anxiously around thee, for I am thy God*—thine, Austria !

It says in the Bible that *the grass withereth,* but does not the Bible wither too ? Is not humanity so modern that a two-thousand-year-old book could be out-of-date ? Such thoughts used to pass through my head once. But since the time of the occupation, I know that the Word of God is always the master of every situation. And so let the Bible speak into your situation, for it is most up-to-date. I close with this verse from the Bible : *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever.* (Isaiah 40:8).

THE BIBLE SOCIETY AND THE DUTCH SCHOOLS

FRANS VISSER

THE joy of being young is to be able to enjoy in a carefree manner all that is good and fine. The very fact that children do not worry about the trouble with which good things have been obtained, makes youth a festive time. Father must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, but the children eat it without a care. It is more or less the same with regard to the Bible, as far as young people are concerned. How boys and girls can enjoy the beautiful stories out of the Bible ! The intensive sympathy with the biblical characters and the tension in these stories are particularly felt by those who hear them for the first time at an early age. Then they do not worry about where these stories come from, who wrote them, whether their original text was handed down faithfully, who translated them into their own language, how it is possible that there are now printed parts of the Bible in more than 1,100 languages, how many people were occupied with the printing and binding

of their Bible, and where father got the money from to buy that Bible. It is just the privilege of youth not to need to worry about all these questions and to be able to enjoy all the riches which the Bible offers.

In the Junior Schools

It is therefore with great caution that our Bible Society tells about Bible Society work in the schools. In the Protestant schools, of which there are many in our country, this opportunity is always given quite readily. Fellow-workers of our home department often travel around with a little show of Bibles in many languages, a Hebrew scroll and some Jewish ritual objects, and then tell in quite a simple way of the truth of God Who, at this time, is fulfilling the promise of Christ, that His Gospel will be preached unto the ends of the earth. Just because we do not want to tire the children too much with the problems of Bible production and supply, we tell them more about the way of the Bible through the world, rather than give them an exposition of what people are doing.

So, for the same reason, an appeal is seldom made to their responsibility for this work. Before the age of fourteen, that would seem to be wrong. That is why this work in the grammar schools has little or no result in bringing in new members and building up our home organisation. However, it brings the children already at a tender age into contact with the Bible Society and as soon as they have grown somewhat older we build up on this knowledge, and we try to interest them also in the work of Bible supply.

Such lessons are also given for the grammar schools on the radio. The Christian Broadcasting Corporation has instructed one of our fellow-workers to give a series of radio-lessons in the form of a radio-play. Estimating roughly, about 25,000 children have been listening to these lessons. Most of them possess an illustrated edition of excerpts from the Bible, which is available in the schools. In this way, many children will in their youth become acquainted with Mary Jones and have a look over the Bible House in Amsterdam. We have heard that the children have been listening to these lessons with great interest and attention and so this contact between Bible Society and youth, may also mean that afterwards, when an appeal will be made for the collaboration of these young people, the Bible Society will not be knocking at a closed door.

In the Senior Schools

The case is quite different when our boys and girls begin to grow up. When they have reached the age of about fourteen and leave the grammar school, it will be right if they learn to wonder how it is possible that their next meal is always available and they begin to get a little understanding of what it costs father and mother in work and management and money. And it is quite right to show them at that age something more of all that is involved in seeking to provide every man with his own Bible in his own language. A great many of them do not yet leave school, but go to a higher grade school of four years' course, or to a secondary school which leads on to the university. To them we show our sound film " Unlimited Horizons," or we use film strips, which we have composed for this purpose. One deals with the subject " Every-one His Own Bible " ; another contains a series of reproductions of biblical pictures of the old masters of the Flemish and Dutch Schools ; a third contains a number of sketches and etchings by our great Dutch artist Rembrandt. Moreover, we have made for this purpose, from recent photographic materials, a series of lantern slides about the land of the Bible, Palestine ; this last series

was intended specially to explain difficult parts of the Bible by procuring more knowledge about the land of Palestine and its population. In this way the Bible Society also informs the teen-agers about its work and contributes to a better knowledge and appreciation of the Bible. These lessons lead to action for the support of the Bible Society's work. Just now we are occupied in looking for the means of organising this collaboration. We are looking for a method of getting the teen-agers active for the Bible Society. We are thinking of youth-membership. Our sound film has already been offered to some schools, on condition that a special number of new subscribers will be enlisted by them. It would be of great value to us if we might hear from the readers of this BULLETIN whether successful methods in this respect are used in other countries. An exchange of experiences can be of great value to us all.

New Developments

Out of these Bible Society hours for teen-agers, quite a new aspect of the work has arisen. In one of our largest towns, the municipality has consented to Bible teaching for all pupils of the higher and secondary schools during school time. It concerns here State schools in which no religious education, or very little is given. More and more people in circles of public education are coming to the conviction that the neglect of Bible instruction and of religious education in the schools is harming youth and they are not always religious motives which make the educational authorities realise this. After all, from the cultural aspect, people are missing very much if they do not know their Bible. How can we understand Rembrandt, who has left about 1,000 biblical illustrations, without a knowledge of the Bible? Who will be able to judge Bach's " St. Matthew Passion " without having read the Passion of Christ, and knowing the music in the setting of the Bible story. Moreover, our own Dutch language has been greatly influenced by the national translation of the Bible, which became available at the same time as our nation acquired its permanent form and organisation (in the early part of the seventeenth century). Also our common spoken language is full of all kinds of quotations from the Bible, and neglect of Bible education includes therefore a necessary reduction of our language. So there are still more reasons why our secular educational authorities realise that contact with the Bible is necessary and the Bible Society in our country is therefore the most obvious organisation to stretch out a helping-hand in this respect. Unlike the churches which are separated by denominational barriers, the Bible Society is not bound by any particular creed and can simply be satisfied with teaching these girls and boys the things which everybody ought to know about the Bible, and this subject has been treated by me in almost all State schools for the teen-agers in one of the main cities of our country. Opportunities for the Bible Society are offered here, for which we are very grateful. I have just finished a series of lessons at these schools. Within thirty-five hours a number of lessons were given to a total of 1,700 pupils. The first lesson treated the subject " What Everybody ought to know about the Bible." After an introduction about the claim which the Bible has to everybody's interest, the influence on language, painting, sculpture and music, something was told about the origin of the Bible, about the oldest manuscripts and the earliest printing and finally about the distribution of the Bible now, and what is necessary for that. Moreover, at some schools, special mention was made of the new translation in Dutch, which will soon be finished. Twenty-five years ago, the Netherlands Bible Society began this work. Why such a new translation is necessary, and how it is effected, is a subject of much interest, especially for secondary school scholars.

This first lesson has often been followed by a second and a third, using then our projection material about Palestine and Rembrandt. These lessons seem to meet a long-felt demand. People are continuously asking for them and if our Bible Society could dispose of more fellow-workers and more financial possibilities, this work could undoubtedly be extended over the whole of our country. At the moment steps are being taken to publish these lessons for the use of teachers in those schools, to instruct in this way a number of fellow-workers from educational circles. A course about the work of the Bible Society is now given for about 160 teachers in secondary schools.

Reactions

From one of these schools a number of the pupils wrote, giving me their impressions of these Bible lessons. From these letters it appeared that the subject had gripped those boys and girls. With great honesty, however, they gave their criticisms. One of them wrote : " How the Bible came to be, doesn't worry me ; the Bible is the Bible—; stop. I myself never read the Bible, because it did not interest me " ! However, this critic honestly confessed that it had exceeded his expectations and that he would attend another lesson in any case. Another writes : " Now we were indeed able to see that we must not consider the Bible as a black book full of foreign names and incomprehensible expressions, but as something fine that we have received from God." And a third one confesses that now he has more interest in the Bible. It was generally appreciated that something could be given for pupils from all churches, even for those without any church connection, and that the ecumenically minded Bible Society, had opened up this possibility.

Bible Society Publications

Surely we may mention in this respect the publication of our children's books by our youth department. These are simple booklets of sixteen or thirty-two pages, beautifully illustrated, written by well-known authors for children, in which in some way the Bible and its distribution have their place. They are sold very cheaply and yearly many thousands of them come into the hands of young people. In 1950, 46,000 of these booklets were distributed. In our country people have become more acquainted with the Bible Society by this means, for these books are of course also read by the parents.

The Responsibility

So we are continually occupied in our country in showing to young people by various means, something of the great task which rests upon the shoulders of our little nation, especially with regard to Indonesia. In 1800 there was in Indonesia, with its 150 tongues, only one translation of the Bible, namely the Malayan. To-day, there are Bible portions available in about 40 different tongues, so that 60 out of the 70 million Indonesians can hear or read the Gospel in their own mother-tongue. This work which has been done in co-operation with Bible Societies of other countries, can only succeed if all Protestants in the Netherlands are willing to contribute to it. That is why it is necessary to involve every Dutchman who appreciates his Bible in the work of Bible provision. In our little country we now count 125,000 subscribers of the Netherlands Bible Society ; this number must increase very sharply, if we wish to be able to meet the needs for Bibles, also in Indonesia.

That is why we try by diverse ways to interest also the young people, so that they realise as early as possible the responsibility for this task resting upon their shoulders.

THE NEW REVISION OF THE HUNGARIAN BIBLE

LADISLAUS M. PÁKOZDY

Historical

THE Bible translation at present used by the Hungarian Protestant Christian community is a revised version of the so-called "*Vizsolyi Biblia*," which appeared in 1590 in the Hungarian village of Vizsoly and was the work of Kaspar Károli, the Reformed Church pastor there and superintendent of the Kassavölgy district, and his colleagues. Neither the portions of the Old Testament and the translations of the New Testament which had appeared before 1590, nor the Protestant and Roman Catholic translations which have been published since have succeeded, right up to the present day, in ousting the Károli translation from its unique position. This version formed the Hungarian language of succeeding centuries in the same way as the Lutheran version formed the German language. Right through the centuries and into the twentieth century, this Bible has held its own without any major revision (apart from small improvements which have been incorporated from the second edition onwards). The first thorough revision—in which the whole Bible appeared in 1908—shows so many alterations that it should not, in the view of many a scholar, any longer bear the deferential sub-title "*Translated into the Hungarian Language by Kaspar Károli. Edition compared with the original Text and revised.*" Károli's name, work and spiritual influence were such that it was impossible, even after 300 years, to print a text with considerable alterations under anything else but his name. There is no doubt that neither the revisers, nor their sponsors, had any desire to put into the hands of Christian people anything more than an improved Károli translation. But even to-day there are many people who still use "the old Károli version" besides the text which appeared in 1908. Many sects also prefer the old translation (as for instance Jehovah's Witnesses, because the name Jehovah is used in the old version and is almost entirely lacking in the revised version).

New Translations

The need for another new revision became more and more apparent, however in the twenties and thirties. Two reasons activated this demand: firstly, the *linguistic archaisms* which, even in the revised version, produced with the years an ever increasingly disturbing effect on the person of to-day and of which people had been made more conscious by individual new translations of the New Testament by scholars like Masznyik, Raffay, Czeglédy, Kecskeméti and Farkas; and secondly, the *increasing interest* in the Bible which developed in the Hungarian Protestant churches as a result of the revival which began after the collapse in 1918. The British and Foreign Bible Society commissioned the Reformed pastor and former theology professor Alexander Czeglédy and the Lutheran Bishop and former theology professor Alexander Raffay with the work of a new revision of the Károli Bible published in 1908, that is of the revised Bible. Both of these men had already published their own translations of the New Testament (that published by Czeglédy also had a second edition).

Revision Work before the End of the War

Through the work of the two above-named scholars, a revised Bible appeared of which a tentative edition was published in 1938. The Old Testament was the work of A. Czeglédy and the New Testament the work of A. Raffay. This Bible might better be called a new translation rather than a

revision, and although it was received with great joy, criticisms were not slow in coming either. It became increasingly clear that any translation of the Bible with the claim to be a Church Bible cannot and must not be the sole work of two scholars, however outstanding they may be. The two churches therefore elected a committee to help Czeglédy and Raffay. The individual books of the Bible were each given to two or three specialists who checked them over and imparted their criticisms to the two revisers. Czeglédy and Raffay worked on untiringly at the revision all through the war. Many articles dealing with the revision appeared in journals of scholarship and systematic theology. When, in the late autumn of 1944 the war reached the town of Cegléd from the east—where Pastor Czeglédy was in charge of a Reformed parish—and Pastor Czeglédy was lying in bed surrounded by books, he was saved by a miracle when a shell tore the roof away over his bed . . . . A few weeks later this great scholar and worthy follower of Károli, a Hungarian Menge, succumbed to his serious illness. In the meantime, not only the advantages, but also the deficiencies of the tentative edition of the Bible were becoming apparent and it was clear that people still preferred the revised Károli version of 1908 to the tentative edition. The great advantage of the tentative edition was the incontestably more modern and understandable language, but among the disadvantages principally mentioned was the exaggerated use of euphemism and the weakening of the impact of biblical expressions. Nor was the consecutive setting of the text, instead of the division into verses, received very favourably.

The Revision Work after the War

As soon as the confusion of war had died down in our liberated land, the matter of the revision was taken up again. Unfortunately, Bishop Raffay had also died. Amongst Pastor Czeglédy's papers a typewritten copy of the Bible version was found and was put at the disposal of the Joint Bible Commission of the two churches by his family. When it became possible to think of printing the Hungarian Bible again, the British and Foreign Bible Society expressed the desire that a new Hungarian text should be provided. The old plates were so badly worn, that it was hardly possible to use them again for printing ; but if the Bible was to be set up again at great cost, then the Society wanted to use a newly revised text for this Bible.

The Joint Bible Commission of the two churches therefore took the initiative by a resolution passed in the summer of 1947. When it was found that the text left among Pastor Czeglédy's papers was ready for printing, it was felt that it should go to press. But because the criticisms had been mainly directed against the New Testament in the tentative edition of the Bible, the New Testament was submitted for yet one more revision by a joint critical commission of seven scholars from both churches (Lutheran and Reformed).

The New Testament Commission set to work at once and came to the conclusion that a thorough check of the New Testament text was necessary. In the meantime, the writer of this article had been asked to make a scrutiny of the text of the Old Testament for any serious errors which might have remained and to prepare the manuscript for printing. He, however, declined to accept, not only pointing out particular deficiencies in the manuscript, but also expressing his conviction that a revision should not be carried out by *one* man, but that in the case of a Bible for Church use, the Reformed Church principle must be adhered to that a committee of scholars should be responsible for the reliability of such a Bible revision or Bible translation, whereas the manuscript in question was the posthumous work of a single scholar. At his request, this problem was also discussed on the New Testament Commission

which then laid before the session of the Joint Bible Commission (10th February, 1948) a request that a commission be set up for the revision of the Old Testament part of the manuscript. The Joint Bible Commission then revoked its former resolution (that the manuscript from the papers of Pastor Czeglédy should be printed) and gave to a commission the responsibility for the revision work on the Old Testament. The text to be used as the basis for the work was that found among the papers of Pastor Czeglédy, but the Joint Bible Commission gave to the Old Testament Commission absolute liberty to be guided only by the principle of faithfully reproducing the Hebrew text.

The present State of the Work of the two Commissions

When the New Testament was completed in the spring of 1949 and was even already set up at the printer's, the members of the Old Testament Commission each read through a proof. On the basis of examples from Matthew, Galatians and Hebrews, they conveyed their critical comments to the New Testament Commission. From these it became clear that the Old Testament Commission, following the original text, had made more fundamental improvements and alterations and used more modern turns of speech than the New Testament Commission. Several joint sessions of the two Commissions were then held and the New Testament Commission checked its text once again and improved it, in order to harmonise the work of the two Commissions. These joint discussions were also helpful and useful for the Old Testament Commission. So the New Testament is now almost ready for printing ; the printer has begun to incorporate the improvements on the text which has already been set up.

The work on the Old Testament from the spring of 1948 to December, 1950, in 25 sessions (of one week to ten days) has reached I Samuel. The text of Genesis and Exodus is ready for the press and Genesis is being set up . . . Since the Commission has not only the latest commentaries available, but also makes use of the valuable work which lies at the back of the latest Bible translations and revisions, which are at present being used in the Church throughout the world, the Commission can in all humility and gratitude to God claim that the new Hungarian Bible translation will be one of the finest in use in the world-wide Church. We are also very grateful for the books which we have received from abroad through the intermediary of the United Bible Societies and for the books of the tentative edition of the new Dutch translation received from the Netherlands Bible Society, as well as for the reference books sent by Christian Reconstruction in Europe and others.

Methods of Work

As a general rule, both Commissions each assembled for a week once a month, in order to discuss the work that had been done at home and to determine the Hungarian text. The Reformed Theological School in Budapest and sometimes the Faculties in Sopron and Debrecen were the scenes of the joint work on the revision, since there were adequate reference books available there. To give some idea of the methods of working in the Old Testament Commission—one of the members of the Commission reads out the Hungarian text aloud and the other members follow in their *Kittel* : *Biblia Hebraica*[3]. Each verse is discussed and often the text of a particular verse is only determined after lengthy discussion, or even put aside for further thought. The Commission never takes decisions by means of a vote : problems must always be solved by the agreement of all the members of the Commission, because matters of truth cannot be decided by a simple majority of votes. Even the

slightest objection of only one member of the Commission must be taken very seriously. The sessions begin every day with prayers and often last, with an interruption at mid-day, until the late hours of the evening.

When a book of the Bible is completed, it is put on one side and some months later it is read aloud to see what the new text sounds like, for the Bible is primarily a book of the Church and of the Church service, to be read aloud. In this respect the Old Testament Commission enjoys the valuable advice of Dr. Imre Révész, Emeritus Professor in the Theological Faculty of Debrecen and former Bishop of the Reformed Church there.

The Old Testament Commission requested the *Hungarian Bible Council** to publish the individual books of the newly revised Bible (Old Testament) in tentative booklet form before the final text was set. This was done, because the Old Testament Commission was of the opinion that Bible revision cannot be just the work of eight people, but that the work of the Commission should, before the type of the whole Bible is set, be made available to Church and even wider circles. All criticism can but be helpful for this most important work. (As I have been writing these lines, the post has brought me the first proofs of the first tentative edition of Genesis in booklet form.) The Hungarian Bible Council granted this request, and so opened up the possibility for very extensive co-operation and fellowship between scholars and churchmen working together on the new Hungarian Bible. The members of the Commission only desire to serve as executors of the original text and guardians of the linguistic treasure of their fathers, but at the same time to work out a translation which will speak to the people of to-day and they will therefore welcome anyone who comes along with a better solution than they have found.

The Churches and the Work of Revision

The churches have shown a great interest in the work of the Old Testament Commission. A number of evangelical churches send all kinds of parcels for each week that the Commission meets, so that the Commission is almost entirely fed by the churches during the times when it is in session. Thus the word of Gal. 6 : 6 is fulfilled to the Commission : those who are taught in the Word are in fellowship with those who teach them "*in all good things.*" The organiser of this love feast, which resembles the early days of Christianity, is Mrs. Lenke Botyánszky, the "invisible housewife" of the Commission. The parcels often bring touching lines written by rough peasant hands which seldom take up the pen, bringing Bible verses and blessings. The Commission

* During the course of 1949 the British and Foreign Bible Society handed over its work, which had been carried on for over an hundred years with rich blessing, to the largest evangelical Church in Hungary, the Hungarian Reformed Church which took over the staff of the Bible Society. At the same time the incentive was given for the formation of a "Hungarian Bible Council" of the evangelical churches and this soon took place with Bishop Bereczky elected as Chairman of the Council. All the evangelical churches of the country are represented on this Bible Council. All matters of the translation, publication and distribution of the Hungarian Bible have been taken over by the Council which fulfills approximately the same task as the national Bible Societies in other countries, except that it is not an official organisation, but an ecumenical fellowship of the evangelical churches and fellowships represented on it. The administration is carried out by the Press Service of the General Conventus of the Reformed Church, but kept quite separate from its other business. At the same time the Hungarian Bible Council took over and empowered from its side also the two scholarly Commissions which had been nominated by the Joint Commission of the two evangelical Reformed and Lutheran churches. Although not all denominations are represented among their members and representation was not given on a percentage basis, but according to the qualifications of the scholars, both Commissions enjoy the full confidence of all the churches and fellowships and we are glad to find that Hungarian evangelical Christianity has found the way to brotherly co-operation also in the work of the Bible.

has the assurance that a large unseen praying Church is carrying its work in faith and this close link with the actual Church strengthens the working power, courage and endurance, joy and conscientiousness of the scholars.

Finally, a word of testimony. Our Hungarian evangelical Christianity has passed through the judgement of God which was gracious to us. God could have obliterated our churches and the light of His Word by the just fulfilment of His judgement. Instead of that we can work in our country day by day on a new revision or translation of the Hungarian Bible, translating one book of the Bible after another and even having it printed . . . . . preparing an edition of the Bible which will be a turning point in the history of the Hungarian Bible.

" Bless the LORD, O my soul, O LORD my God, thou art very great . . . . ."
" O give thanks unto the LORD ; call upon his name : make known his deeds among the people."

LANDS OF TOMORROW

WILFRED J. BRADNOCK

"BRAZIL is the Land of To-morrow" said General Mendes de Morais, former Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, " and to-morrow is a holiday." As this was part of an election speech it is not easy to say whether it was a sample of vote-snatching romanticism or just plain cynicism. The fact that he lost the election, however, is a clear indication of the fundamental commonsense of the ordinary Brazilian.

The Country

Land of To-morrow? Undoubtedly, if that implies a place in the sun for a people who have as rich a share in the world's latent resources as any other people on earth. Cities like Rio and Sao Paulo have few rivals either for natural beauty or for civic and national pride. On every hand faith in the future is revealed in terms of lavish expenditure on public works and massive building programmes. Her true riches, however, are her people and it is not surprising to find that one of the greatest social experiments of all time in communal living is being successfully carried out in Brazil. Here we may find people of a dozen different countries and almost as many shades of skin, living side by side in perfect harmony and with equal rights before the law. The country is still young enough for the varying traditions to be obvious to all, yet the outstanding national sentiment is one of ever-deepening loyalty to the land of their adoption. Well might other nations aspiring to greatness and world leadership learn a lesson from Brazil's handling of the " colour bar."

There are, of course, certain less favourable features which unfortunately are equally obvious. Many inhabitants of pleasure-loving Rio would undoubtedly like to-morrow to be a perpetual holiday. Perhaps wealth has come to some too easily. Yet with all the easy-going luxury of the cities there is still a very considerable poverty and seemingly little conscience about it. In Rio alone many thousands of people live in conditions which can only be described as inhuman. Without light, water or sanitation, they herd together in ramshackle huts of their own building on high slopes surrounding the loveliest bay in the world. Below them tower to the skies some of the most magnificent luxury hotels, private houses and state buildings to be found in any country. Yet few seem to be disturbed by this stark contrast of

poverty and plenty. Perhaps the most important key to Brazil's future lies in a further development of her social conscience in a field where "laissez faire" has nothing to contribute to a people who have already caught the eye of the world in her dealing with the "colour bar." Not only are there slums to offset her natural beauty but there is corruption in high places, as anyone who has dealings with certain types of officials may soon discover. Many thoughtful people believe that President Vargas is aware of these evils and can be counted on to find an answer (evangelicals have noted hopefully that he has a son named Luther !)

The Church

Meanwhile, it is not too much to say that it is in the evangelical community that much of the hope for to-morrow is vested. How could one ever forget the privilege of worshipping with so many of these fine people in the churches of Rio ? The community may well be relatively young in years, but already it is a recognisable force in the life of the country, with not a few resounding achievements to its credit. In early days the form of its life and witness was largely determined by the fact that it was a minority won from Roman Catholicism and living constantly against a background of religious mediaevalism. In the nature of things, its activities public and private were largely characterised by the element of protest. While these conditions still obtain in many places, there is increasing evidence that a marked change is taking place. The leading churches are now passing over to a positive, and creative emphasis. The first Presbyterian church in Sao Paulo and the first Baptist church in Rio are excellent illustrations of this. The minister of the latter, the Rev. John Soren, decorated by the Americans for bravery at Monte Cassino, is now conducting one of the most remarkable ministries in the southern hemisphere. His congregations, morning and evening, number well over a thousand. Every day of the week a large school meets on the church premises, financed and staffed by church members, and there is also a clinic with a full-time doctor supported by the church. These ventures are made possible, not because the church is unusually wealthy, but because tithing is the general practice. This means a regular monthly offering which runs into several hundreds of pounds. The impact of the life of churches such as these on the community is incalculable. But it is by no means exceptional in Brazil. Churches everywhere are throbbing with life and vitality and many of them having outgrown their premises in the last few years, are now planning with great faith and vision for an ever-rising tide of increase. It is surely significant that the Bible Society secretaries have orders for 200,000 Bibles—which so far they have been unable to fulfil—a sign that as the Church grows numerically, she is also tending the roots.

The Bible

The version which for long has been most widely used is the Portuguese Brazilian of D'Almeida, the New Testament of which goes back to 1681. This version was originally prepared for the use of Portuguese communities in the East Indies and was based on Beza's Latin version, with the help of other versions in Spanish, French and Italian. It has been revised several times, but the new impulse given to biblical studies in the course of the last twenty years has necessitated something much more thorough and fundamental than any of the earlier revisions. It is fortunate that the present committee, which has been working for six years on the New Testament, includes men of mature biblical scholarship, as well as acknowledged experts in the Portuguese language. It is hoped that the New Testament will go to press in July and that the Old Testament will be ready within four years.

The appearance of this new version will undoubtedly lend a great impulse to Bible work throughout the whole of Brazil, where the recently founded national Bible Society is already making great advances in the service of the whole evangelical cause. In the course of the last two years, no fewer then nineteen Auxiliaries have been opened up in many distant parts of the country, and the Rev. Ewaldo Alves reported, after a recent tour, that interest was widening and deepening on every hand. The world war caused many setbacks to Bible work in Brazil, but it is clear that this period of difficulty and frustration is rapidly coming to an end and that the day is in sight when the enthusiasm and fervour of the churches will be fully seconded by the services of the Bible Society.

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The situation in ARGENTINA is very different from what one finds in her more northerly neighbour. Even within a stay of four short days, one could detect the difference in the fundamental outlook of the people. The Argentinian is phlegmatic, solid and not easily moved. He seems to lack the artistic sensibility of his Brazilian neighbour, perhaps because the conditions which have gone to the making of his country are so vastly different. There is no great intermingling of races. There is a proud aristocracy of Spanish descent and there is a strong bourgeois element which enjoys a high standard of living. As far as one could see, there was little evidence of poverty, though no doubt in the hinterland, life involved a struggle for not a few. The most important distinction, however, is in the field of religious tolerance, for although Roman Catholicism is not officially the state religion, its hand lies heavily upon the evangelical cause. Nevertheless, the churches here are vigorous and growing, while Bible work—though in its infancy—has an assured future. Under the energetic leadership of Sr. Canclini and Dr. Turner, the Sociedades Biblicas Unidas is formulating ambitious plans for to-morrow. Perhaps the churches were not so big or so crowded as in Rio, but nothing could have revealed the deep concern of the evangelical community more effectively than the inspiring rally in the Theatre Avenida in Buenos Aires on the night of 13th November, 1950. It was the first of its kind and on that occasion some 2,000 people flocked to hear addresses centred on the Bible and Bible work in Argentina. It was an evening of many unforgettable experiences.

As in Brazil, the great need in Argentina and throughout the rest of Latin America is for a revision of the Scriptures which will adequately meet contemporary needs. The classical version of Latin America is the Spanish version of de Valera, which after nearly 400 years has become deeply embedded in the religious life and experience of the whole Christian Church. Many early attempts to get together a committee equal to the urgent task of revision have at last been crowned with success, and the first session of a newly-formed revision committee has just come to an end in Costa Rica. Scholars from all parts of the Latin American world will have a voice in this revision, while Sr. Araujo, for many years agent of the B.F.B.S. in Spain, will speak for the needs of the Iberian Peninsula. The revision is not to be a heavy one, but such as will remove the archaisms and crudities, without affecting the essential quality of this much-loved version. When it is ready, the evangelical church will have a Bible not only worthy of her traditions, but fit to serve the spiritual needs of generations to come.

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In the previous issue of the BULLETIN, there was an article on the rediscovery of the Bible in the Roman Catholic church in Austria. Although there is as yet no widespread movement in Latin America, there are signs that the papal encyclical *Divino Afflante* of 1942 (the English version of which is called

'Stand by the Bible') is already having some effect. One afternoon two priests called on Dr. Turner at the Bible depot in Buenos Aires, carrying a case full of B.F.B.S. Spanish and Italian versions. They wanted to know the the secrets of Bible Society work, how it was possible to produce Scriptures in all parts of the world at such cheap rates and in such excellent bindings. The answer was not difficult to give. It was that the Protestant Church has always prized the Word of God above all else and has been united in its zeal and determination to carry it to the ends of the earth. The reply to this was interesting : " Our Church has not gone as far as that—yet." But these two men were ready to go to very great lengths in ensuring the availability of the Word of God to their own people. One of them had even engaged in industrial enterprise in order to raise funds for Bibles. Although at the moment there is little evidence that the general atmosphere in Latin America is more favourable to the evangelical cause than before, is it unreasonable to suppose that, if the Roman Church should rediscover the Scriptures for herself, a great day of awakening and of incalculable opportunity for all who love the Scriptures may be at hand?

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information of the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

England

THE *British and Foreign Bible Society* is planning to present a specially bound copy of the Fanti Bible to the new parliament in Accra, Gold Coast. At the initial session of the newly-elected parliament more than 75% of the members wished to take the Oath on the Bible. The country is largely Moslem.

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As was also the case in 1950, a Bible Society Conference will be held again this year by the British and Foreign Bible Society, from 28th May to 4th June at Swanwick. The central themes of the Conference will be : " The Eternal Gospel in a World of Ferment " and " The Changing Pattern of the World."

■

The B.F.B.S. is now setting up in Paris a strong representative committee to prepare a new translation of the New Testament in Russian. Although the present version is still acceptable to the Church, it has long been felt that a new version is needed for the post-revolution generation who are no longer able to appreciate the use of the Old Slavonic.

The committee has representatives of all the main Orthodox jurisdictions of the West and East, the chief translator being Bishop Cassian of the St. Sergius Academy in Paris. Groups of assessors will also function in America and England. The first meeting of the commission will take place on 3rd April in Paris and subsequently the translation committee will meet four times a year. It is hoped that the work will be completed in three years.

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The B.F.B.S. has just published a new Gospel in magazine format : " There was a Festival ; Good News according to St. John." A first issue of 50,000 copies has been printed.

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The B.F.B.S. is preparing the publication of a 96-page booklet containing the Acts of the Apostles in a diglot edition, Ancient Greek : Modern Greek. This volume is being published for the celebration of the 19th centenary of St. Paul's arrival in Europe, which is being commemorated in June in Greece. It will contained a number of illustrations showing sites mentioned in the Book of Acts.

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On 7th March last, a first airmailed copy of the first edition of the Old Testament in Kikuyu (Kenya) was presented to the representatives of the churches in Nairobi.

The first portion in Kikuyu was printed in 1903, and the New Testament was issued for the first time in 1926. This edition of the Old Testament is a joint one of the B.F.B.S. and N.B.S.S., and has been published in 10,000 copies at a cost of 10s. 7d. each. They will be sold at 4s. 0d. per copy and orders have already reached the Bible Society for more than 50,000 copies.

Finland

Just as this issue was about to go to Press, news came through of the death of Archbishop Aleksi Lehtonen, Chairman of the *Finnish Bible Society*, during the night of March 26th—27th.

Archbishop Lehtonen represented the Finnish Bible Society at the Elfinsward conference in May, 1946, when the foundations of the U.B.S. were laid and he played an important part in that meeting. Unfortunately, heart trouble later obliged him to limit his activities to a minimum and prevented the U.B.S. from enjoying the full benefit of his experience and his interest in Bible Society work.

Our sympathy goes to Mrs. Lehtonen, who will be remembered by all who attended the Elfinsward conference, and to our friends of the Finnish Bible Society who have lost in their chairman a sure leader and a keen supporter of their work.

France

The material which the Belgian Bible Society has put together for its biblical exhibitions, has been lent to the *French Bible Committee* for two exhibitions of a fortnight each in Metz and Nancy. Local libraries also lent some valuable 11th century manuscripts and incunabula and the synagogue offered to the Committee the loan of an old roll of the book of Esther.

The exhibition in Metz was opened in the presence of the Chief Magistrate of the Department, his deputy, the Scripture Professor of the Roman Catholic seminary for priests and the chief Rabbi. A public meeting was organised at the close of the exhibition, at which a Benedictine Father, Mr. Blumenthal and Pastor Harts, the latter of the Belgian Bible Society, gave the addresses.

These exhibitions, which were of a very undenominational character, have aroused great interest among the population, and a good number of Scriptures were sold by the bookstalls attached to the exhibitions.

It is planned to take this exhibition on a six months' tour of a number of French cities early next year.

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In a report of the " Mission Populaire Evangélique " (MacAll Mission) one of its workers, the Rev. W. Moscherosch, active in a suburb of La Rochelle, gives a description of an evangelistic campaign centred round a biblical exhibition. This report gives some idea of the hardship in the work in certain areas. The MacAll Mission is represented on the French Bible Committee.

" We have prepared and organised an exhibition on the Bible. All means of publicity were used : à banner, 5 metres long and 70cm deep, was made and hung across one of the main streets which is 18 metres wide. Announcements were placed in all the local newspapers, tracts were distributed which we had composed and which were duplicated with the help of the children from the " Fraternité " and of the boys from the educational centre at Aubreçay and a public meeting was arranged with the help of the choir from Aubreçay ; placards were put up, homes were visited and choirs toured the various quarters ; the documents supplied by the French Bible Committee and by several families in La Rochelle were put on show ; the preparations were all carefully made with the help of two boys and a girl from the " Fraternité " ; the exhibition was open from 6.0 p.m. until 9.0 p.m. every day from the 20th to 26th September. Very few responded to our invitation. During the course of the public evening meeting, between the songs given by the boys from the educational centre, five short messages were given by the Director of Aubreçay, a theology student, a captain of the Salvation Army, a student from St. Germain and myself. These messages told of what the Bible means to each one of the speakers.

" During this evening there were 90 people present ; 30 members of the church in La Rochelle, 30 adults from Laleu-La Pallice and 30 children. Besides this evening, during six other evenings we had 15 visitors of whom 5 wished to remain incognito. One Bible was sold and several copies of New Testaments and of the illustrated Gospel of St. Mark were requested. Broadly speaking, we had obtained our object. We were not so interested in ' winning ' the crowd as in making a display in the quarter to show who we were and what we were working for.

" The majority of the people we wished to reach are indifferent to the biblical revelation. The population of these quarters is essentially made up of proletarians working in the ports and the docks and seems to be particularly rebellious to evangelisation.

" But it is certain that the fundamental reason behind the difficulties in our work lies in the absence of any spiritual community on which we could count in our battle. We need several families living according to the Gospel in the midst of the rest and for the moment there are none.

" How are we going to continue the fight ? I propose to visit each house systematically and proclaim the Gospel there. I need the spiritual support of all who understand the meaning of this work, for these visits to the homes are real family evangelistic meetings. They are exhausting and after several of them one returns as battered as a soldier after a hand-to-hand fight."

Germany

The *Altenburg Bible Society*, which is one of the branches of the *Thuringian Bible Society* (Eastern Germany) has just published its first edition of complete Bibles since the end of the war, printed from the matrices supplied by the Stuttgart Bible Society.

The Altenburg Bible Society is working on an edition of an illustrated Gospel of Luke.

For the catechists of Eastern Germany, this same Society has also printed a Bible concordance and Bible dictionary edited by the *Stuttgart Bible Society* for which the mattrices were supplied by the latter Society.

These books have been published exclusively for use in the German Democratic Republic.

■

The Stuttgart Bible Society has fulfilled an order for 16,000 School Bibles (abridged) passed to it by the school authorities in Hamburg. This Bible has been introduced into the schools as a text book.

Japan

The two-volume " Good Will Book " containing signatures, collected in America by the American Bible Society, of over thirty thousand subscribers to the Ten Million Scriptures for Japan Campaign, was handed over to the custody of the *Japan Bible Society* on 26th December, 1950, before more than a thousand people in the Hibiya Hall. The ceremony was attended by the Vice-Prime Minister, the Governor of Tokyo and various church officials.

" The prominence given to this presentation in the Press, in the form of photographs and news items," says a report of the Japan Bible Society, " has done much to focus the public attention on the activities of the Society and, we hope and pray, on the Book which it is our joy to propagate."

The imperial family asked the General Secretary of the Japan Bible Society to take the Book to the Palace for their perusal.

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The following passages on colportage work in Japan in 1950 are extracted from the annual report of the Japan Bible Society ; over a million copies of Scripture (about a third of the total circulation) were sold by the colporteurs.

" Most of the colporteurs are sponsored by local pastors. The colporteurs in turn sponsor groups who undertake to give some time regularly to this work of selling Scriptures, an hour a day, or even an hour a week. Each colporteur is equipped—or about to be equipped—with a good bicycle. In addition he has a 35mm projector. A new method of evangelism has been worked out by these men. They have found so many people in the villages who are genuinely interested. So during the day they go from door to door, interesting people in their books, and selling them. They also have posters displayed in various prominent places in the village, announcing a lecture on the Bible and Gospel stories to be given in the evening. This is illustrated by film strips. A copy of one of the books the colporteur has sold during the day secures admission to the show. This has been a most effective way of getting people intelligently interested, to say nothing of the greatly increased sales . . . . .

" During the year we have had conferences with the colporteurs in several of the centres. These conferences have been greatly appreciated. An opportunity is given for each man to tell about his work, the methods he uses, and difficulties met. Above all the men have fellowship with one another. About 30 men will gather from several prefectures for such a conference. We have been interested in observing the type of man who has been attracted to this type of evangelism. There is a good sprinkling of men who have been in the pastorate, and who now seek in colportage an extended scope for their work as evangelists. Pastor Endo specialises in working in hospitals. Mrs. Higo a woman colporteur in Tokyo, is a registered nurse. She taught in a Nurses' School and through her connections she now has access to the patients in various hospitals."

■

" Christianity has unparalleled opportunities in Japan," writes the Rev. Dr. Kozaki. " For instance, a choir under the direction of Pastor Lacour, has travelled up and down the country. It has attracted more than 450,000 people and about 38,000 of them have shown a desire to study the Bible."

Liberia

The Rev. Paul Collyer, assistant secretary in the Foreign Department of the American Bible Society, spent several weeks early this year visiting Liberia, with a view to increasing the efficiency of the work there. The renewed effort will bear on translation work (there are about 20 native languages in Liberia, but there is no complete Bible in any of them and only nine portions of Scripture have been translated into five of them), training in the use of the Scriptures, production of diglots (English is the official language of the Government) and Scriptures for new literates.

Mexico

Sr. H. T. Marroquin, the Bible Society agent, gives in the last issue of " La Biblia en America Latina " the following account of the work in Mexico last year, when his first act had been to create an Advisory Council of the American Bible Society agency there :

" We are very glad to show that we have not had long to wait for results (of the Council's formation). We have, for example, had a circulation of Holy Scriptures in this country in the course of the administrative year ended 31st October which surpassed that of the previous year, since 25,929 Bibles (last year 21,019), 18,793 New Testaments (17,122) and 86,812 Portions (60,741) were distributed. We are able to assert that 70% of this distribution was to non-evangelical people, of whom the greater majority professed the Roman Catholic religion. So it is that we thank God, because the Roman Catholic people are taking more interest in studying the Word of God. It is possible that the religious zeal aroused in a special way during the ' Holy Year ' proclaimed by the Vatican amongst the Roman Catholic flock, may have contributed in part, although indirectly and even in spite of the systematic campaign of its spiritual directors against the acceptance of the Holy Scriptures that we ourselves are pledged to publish without notes and without the Apocryphal Books. Once more it has been shown that the Power of the Word of God opens a passage in the hearts of people so quickly as it is given room. God help us, the evangelical Christians of all Latin America, to distribute systematically and profusely the Good News of Salvation through all the boundaries of our own countries, for in the knowledge and obedience of the teachings of this Divine Book is rooted the secret of prosperity, peace and happiness, not only temporal but eternal, of these young countries and indeed of the whole world.

" We are also glad to say that gifts for the Bible cause during the year exceeded the target set by the Advisory Council. There was an increase of 50% on the 1949 total, the final figure for 1950 being 47,519.04 pesos mexicanos."

Scotland

The *National Bible Society of Scotland* has just issued an edition of 50,000 copies of the Acts of the Apostles in Union Nyanja, spoken in Tanganyika, E. Africa. This is a large-size, attractive booklet for which a 14-point type has been chosen, making the reading of it very clear and easy even for new literates. The publication is a joint edition of the National Bible Society of Scotland and the British and Foreign Bible Society.

United States of America

The Y.M.C.A. claims that 500,000 young men attended Bible studies and religious classes organised by them in the U.S.A. in 1950.

■

The *American Bible Society* has issued the first New Testament in Kikwango (sometimes also called Kituba, Kingara or Commercial Kikango), a trade language used by sixteen mission stations in a large area of south western Belgian Congo. This language is spoken by about half a million people. Five thousand copies each of the Gospels of Mark and John are being printed for evangelistic work.

*

The American Bible Society circulated in the U.S.A. in 1950 over 28,000 embossed volumes of the Scriptures or Talking Book records for the blind, an increase of nearly 10,000 on the previous year. The major achievement of the year was the completion of the second recording of the entire Bible on 169 Talking Book records. The records have met a great need among those sightless people who are unable to read with their finger tips.

■

The Board of Managers of the American Bible Society has approved the publication of an edition of 30,000 copies of a new translation of St. John's Gospel in Haitian Creole, and the printing of a new diglot version of St. Mark in Zapotec (Panama) and Spanish.

*

" The Way Out of the Dark " is the theme that has been chosen by the American Bible Society for its 1951 World-wide Bible Reading programme, which is observed from Thanksgiving to Christmas. The material for Universal Bible Sunday, the high point of the Bible-reading programme, will be prepared on the same theme. Universal Bible Sunday will be observed this year on 9th December.

Dr. Joseph Richard Sizoo, president of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, will be the author of the brochure. The brochure is mailed, with other appropriate materials for the observance of Bible Sunday, early in the fall to more than 135,000 Protestant pastors of over 50 denominations.

Last year, the seventh year of the observance, thirty-eight countries participated. Over 20,000 copies of the poster announcing the 1950 theme, " The Bible—A Light and a Guide " were mailed without lettering and imprinted locally in languages as diverse as Arabic and Japanese. Many translations were made of the brochure prepared for ministers and also of the Scripture passages chosen for the daily readings.

■

The American Bible Society is prepared to supply to the chaplains of the Armed Forces all the Scriptures they can use. The great bulk of these are pocket-sized Testaments. Orders for 2,000,000 of these Service Testaments were placed in 1950. The Publication Department of the Society is planning to produce 1,500,000 additional Testaments in 1951.

United Bible Societies

Miss Margaret T. Hills, the Librarian of the American Bible Society, has collated for the U.B.S. Secretariate the following information on the number of languages into which the Bible, in whole or in part, has been translated as at the end of December, 1950 :

Languages in which the whole Bible has been published	191
,, ,, ,, a complete New Testament has been published	246
,, ,, ,, at least a Gospel or other whole book has been published	597
TOTAL LANGUAGES in which at least one complete book of the Bible has been published	1,034

There are also 91 languages in which there have been printed short passages or collections of passages of Bible text but in which no complete book of the Bible has been printed. *In previous years, these have been included in the total number of languages.*

These figures include translations published by mission presses, commercial printers and private publishers as well as the Bible Societies.

The whole Bible was printed for the first time in 1950 in one new language : Kashgar Turki, spoken in Sinkiang (Turkestan).

New Testaments were published for the first time in 1950 in two new languages : Kikwango (Belgian Congo) and Kurukh (Central Provinces of India).

Gospels were published during the year for the first time in five new languages, as follows :

Dyak : Maanjan	Luke	Borneo
Jorai	Mark & John	Annam
Nyimang	Mark	Sudan
Riang Lang	Mark	Burma
Sara : Madjingai	John	French Equatorial Africa

These are all British and Foreign Bible Society publications, with the exception of the Dyak : Maanjan St. Luke, which is a joint publication of the B.F.B.S., National Bible Society of Scotland and Netherlands Bible Society. It should be noted, however, that some selections had already been published in this language.

Furthermore, three languages into which complete books of the Bible had been published, the first by the American Baptist Mission Press and the other two privately, but which had not been recorded in the previous "lists of languages," have been added to this year's total. They are :

Chin : Laizo, Gospels & Acts (Burma)
English : Lancashire : Radcliffe, St. Luke (England)
Romany : Italian, Song of Solomon (Italy)

During the course of 1950 several of the Bible Societies published Gospels presented in the form of illustrated magazines. St. Mark appeared in French (French Bible Committee), St. Matthew in English (British and Foreign Bible Society), St. Luke in English, Spanish and Japanese (American Bible Society), Dutch and Indonesian (Netherlands Bible Society).

The success with which these publications have met has been such that several societies have decided to reprint them. Furthermore, other portions of Scripture are being prepared for publication in the same presentation : Epistles of Paul (in French), Gospel of St. John (in English), Acts of the Apostles (in English, New York ; in Dutch and Indonesian, Amsterdam).

The Altenburg Bible Society (Eastern Germany) has the Gospel of St. Luke in the Press and the Norwegian Bible Society is preparing to publish the Gospel of Mark in a new translation.

■

The Standing Committee of the UNITED BIBLES SOCIETIES is meeting from 11th-15th June in Sarpsborg, Norway. One of the main points on the Agenda will be the preparation for the Council Meeting which is to be held in South India from 17th-24th February, 1952. The Executive Committee of the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon had invited the U.B.S. already in 1948 to arrange for a Council Meeting to be held in India.

In the last week of September this year a Regional Conference of the U.B.S. will take place in Nancy (France). Delegates from several European Bible Societies and representatives of many churches and Christian organisations of France and Belgium, will concentrate their studies and discussions on the place of the Bible in the Church and in Evangelism.

Literacy

Dr. Laubach in his Africa Newsletter No. 8, written after his fourth visit to Africa in 1950, indicates that he and his team have prepared lessons to teach illiterates to read in 96 languages. There are about 900 languages spoken in Africa and a great many more dialects. However, probably not more than 200 languages will be considered of sufficient importance for the preparation of literacy lessons.

■

Malaya : The Birmingham Diocesan Committee of the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel arranged a festival service in Birmingham in the Cathedral on the eve of St. Andrew's Day. The Dean of Manchester, the Rt. Rev. J. L. Wilson, Bishop of Singapore from 1941 to 1948, preached. He said that one of the greatest dangers of the last fifty years was that every day thousands of Malays were learning to read but there were only two things available to satisfy their appetite—Communist literature and American comic strips.

■

Latin America : From the January-February, 1951 issue of " World Dominion," we quote the following paragraphs from an article written by Dr. G. Baez-Camargo, entitled " Let the People Read " :

" Illiteracy in Latin America is one of the most acute problems, especially in those countries where there is a large Indian or Negro population, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Cuba and Haiti. In most of these countries, the Protestants have been in the front ranks of literacy campaigns launched by the governments or by themselves. Dr. Frank C. Laubach's visits have helped to organize literacy work and to produce charts and other materials. The first impulse in these campaigns has almost always come from Protestants.

" It is a striking, though natural fact that illiteracy among Protestants is extremely low—according to one estimate, between two and five per cent.—while the national percentage may be forty, sixty or even more. That percentage is furnished by new converts. But usually no convert remains illiterate for long. Many instances are known of converts, not only in their early adult age, but often as old as seventy or more, who have learned to read all by themselves, labouring over their Bible and their hymnbook. In Latin America, a Protestant is practically always a literate, as has been pointed out, not

because Protestantism makes its appeal exclusively to literate people, but because illiterate converts just cannot afford to remain illiterate. First, they notice how indispensable it is, in order to become a good Protestant Christian, to be able to read the Bible personally. Secondly, it is an ascertained fact that their conversion implies also an awakening of their intellect and a craving for knowledge and education."

■

Burma : There are 2,750,000 children of school-going age in Burma, but only 54,000 receive even the rudiments of school training. At least 50% of the schools have been totally destroyed by war and 30% have been badly damaged. The shortage of trained teachers is desperate, and facilities for training them are inadequate, in a country where technical development has been retarded so long. Along with providing children with adequate instruction, it is equally important that teaching be provided for millions of illiterate adults.

■

Persia : From a report on literacy sent by the secretary of the Persian Agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev. A. Nakhosteen, we take the following extracts :

" The percentage of adult literacy to-day is approximately 4%. Schemes for adult education were started several years ago but were not followed up. Last year there were 1,163 classes for adults throughout the country, with 33,960 enrolments, but only 4,500 received certificates. Nothing in the way of a campaign has been started by missionary societies. The American Presbyterian Mission in Teheran published three readers under the Laubach Method. Here and there a few individuals have been taught to read under this method and even that little interest has not been kept up and at the present time the use made of these readers is little indeed.

" It is very difficult to give statistics of the number of adults who have learned to read during the last five years. So many who enrol give up. But it may be safe to say that some 20,000 have learned to read in that period. The effort was allowed to lapse during and after the war years. The figure of 33,960 enrolments given above and 4,500 who received certificates is the highest recorded. It is estimated that about 5,000 will learn to read per annum in the next five years. It would also be interesting to note that of these the ratio would be one woman to every 100 men.

" The great difficulty is the Persian script. It would take an adult a few years to become an acceptable reader. There are movements and have been for some time to change the script but nothing has been done towards realizing this so far excepting that various alphabets have been suggested.

" There are under 300,000 Christians and much smaller minorities of Parsis and Jews in Persia. All the rest are Moslems. This is out of a population of 15 to 18 millions ; there has never been a proper census. There is greater interest to read amongst the Christians and they are even quicker in learning. One of the first things a new convert wants to do is to learn to read and there are usually people in the church who are willing to help . . . . .

" The Bible Society portions and editions in general are the cheapest in the country and well within the reach of the average man who learns to read. Our annual circulation is round about 40,000 volumes a year. There is also an Inter-Church Literature Committee in the country. They circulated 47,149 copies in 1949, but I suppose most of these are one-page and two-page

missionary tracts. They employ no colporteurs but their books are purchased by mission funds by various mission stations and the chances are, as always happens in such cases, that a large quantity of these books still lie in the shelves in various places . . . . .

" I still think that a photo-lithographic large-type Gospel would be very useful. We have had the Gospel of St. John written out in beautiful Persian hand-writing. There are certain corrections which we are gradually seeing to and once the manuscript is ready I shall forward it to London, and shall suggest they print it with illustrations for the purpose of new literates. It would be a very useful edition."

Roman Catholicism and the Bible

Austria : Dr. Pius Parsch (cf. BULLETIN 5, pp. 3-7) has announced the launching of a new Bible venture called " Klosterneuburger Bibelapostolat " (Klosterneuburg Bible Apostolate). A dual aim is given to this missionary venture, namely the circulation of the Bible and the teaching of the Bible. " Through colporteurs we want to circulate cheap Bibles and by means of Bible studies, Bible courses and Bible lectures, to teach the knowledge of the Bible. Our goal is that people should read the Scriptures independently.

" During recent months I have several times been in contact with representatives of the British Bible Society. With amazement I learned that this Society distributes the Scriptures in 750 languages and in millions of copies. This is not a business, for the Society sells the Bible generally at less than cost price. In our small Austria the Society's colporteurs sell 50,000 copies of Catholic and Protestant Scriptures in a year. They are not trying to win proselytes and make a point of offering Catholic Bibles to Catholics and Protestant Bibles to Protestants. Then I thought to myself : what the Bible Society is achieving through its colporteurs, we can also accomplish. We would have even stronger propaganda material, if we had a recommendation from our Bishop and from the local priest to show, and especially if the priest would recommend the distribution from the pulpit, seeing that the population of Austria is 94% Catholic.

" But I told myself that we must eliminate one of the weaknesses of the Protestant Bible circulation : the Bible Society colporteurs just sell the Bible, but have no means of teaching the people to read the Bible. So it may happen that some of those who purchase Bibles put the book on one side because they do not learn how to use it. We are going to deal with this weakness by introducing them to an understanding of the Bible."

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Colombia : Under the auspices of the " Acción Católica " in the diocese of Medillin, Pbro. Néstor Giraldo, professor of Holy Scriptures in Medillin Seminary, has founded a Catholic Bible Fund, which aims at publishing copies of the Holy Scriptures in popular editions. This Fund started its activity by printing an edition of 100,000 Gospels.

In presenting his first publication the Director recalls that " the Catholic Church does not forbid the reading of the Bible by the faithful, on the contrary she recommends it, with the sole safeguard that they use editions made under the watchful care of the ecclesiastical authorities."

The Catholic Bible Fund proposes to make elegant and cheap editions of the Scriptures, with explanations sufficient for the people to be able to understand the meaning.

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Latin America : From an article published by Mr. Wilton M. Nelson in "The Bible Messenger," of San Jose, Costa Rica, we take the following extracts :

"It is a matter of much satisfaction to the Evangelical people of Latin American to note how the Roman Catholic Church in recent years has shown an interest in the distribution and the study of the Holy Scriptures. Already there is no difficulty in obtaining a copy of them in the bookshops. They are even offering to persons of limited means portions of the New Testament (such as the Four Gospels or the Book of Acts) in booklets at cheap prices.

"It is already some years since the 'Fathers of the Divine Word' of Argentina published an edition of the version of Torres Amat. His edition of the New Testament is annotated by Mons. Dr. John Straubinger, and even from the Evangelical point of view many of his notes are good and acceptable.

"Another notable step in this modern revival of the study of the Bible among Latin American Roman Catholics, is the appearance of two modern versions : Nacar-Colunga and Bover Cantera (both translated from the original texts) with the necessary ecclesiastical licenses.

"Formerly the Roman Catholics used almost exclusively the version of Father Scio and that of Torres Amat, both of which were based on the Vulgate. They were of course inferior versions, because they were translations of a translation. So much was this so that Menéndez y Pelayo, the great literary critic (Spaniard and Catholic) in his work 'The Spanish Heretics' wrote the following words in commenting on the version of Casiodoro de Reina—which, revised by De Valera, the Evangelical people commonly use to-day : 'As it was made during the greatest period of the Spanish language, the version of Casiodoro surpasses greatly in that aspect the modern Torres Amat and the unfortunate one of Father Scio.'

"But now, to the great satisfaction of the Evangelicals, the new Catholic versions do not suffer from the grave defects of the old versions, and are almost exactly equal in meaning to our own. This is due to the fact that the translators were doing their work on the basis of the original texts, just as the Protestant translators have always done."

Miscellaneous

A standardized Braille alphabet to serve five million blind persons in the Middle East, India, South-East Asia and Africa has been agreed upon at a UNESCO Conference just concluded in Beirut, Lebanon.

The alphabet, which was developed by delegates, some of them blind, of eleven nations, is designed to replace more than twenty local Braille scripts now in use in these regions. It closely follows the script which was worked out by Louis Braille in 1829, a system of 64 combinations of raised dots.

The enlarged basic alphabet agreed upon at Beirut uses the original Braille symbols for corresponding sounds in Asian and African languages, but adds signs for extra letters—sounds in such languages as Arabic, Hindustani and Malay. In Asia it will cover all Braille writing with the exception of the ideographic languages used in China, Korea, Indo-China and Japan.

The Beirut Conference, whose decisions are subject to final ratification by the Governments represented, follows nearly 18 months of discussions and preparatory work by UNESCO with the object of creating a world alphabet

in Braille for blind readers in all languages. The eleven nations taking part in it were : Ceylon, Egypt, French North Africa, Hashemite Jordan, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Malaya, Pakistan, Persia and Syria.

■

The Soviet state publishers have just issued a dictionary of foreign words which explains the meaning of some 20,000 words and phrases of non-Russian origin. The following is the definition given to the word " Bible " : "A collection of fantastic legends without any scientific justification, full of sombre allusions, historical errors and contradictions."

*

Newspaper Publishing Houses are being nationalized by the government of the Chinese People's Republic, or else they are converted into co-operative societies owned by the workers and peasants. New newspapers are founded on this basis in all provinces of China.

Since 1951 also the book-trade has been subjected to the same treatment in so far as political books or educational literature intended for the broad masses are concerned. On the other hand, scientific, industrial, agricultural, medical and similar works are still being published by private firms.

The sale of books and reviews has become a monopoly of the New China Book Agency which has been taken over by the State. This Agency supplies booksellers who are being encouraged not to restrict their activities to " selling across the counter," but to take active part in the founding of libraries and reading rooms.

TOWARDS A BIBLE SOCIETY OF INDONESIA

GIOK P. KHOUW

IN the first issue of the 1950 BULLETIN there was published a short history of the co-operation of Bible Societies in Indonesia. In considering the then present conditions, Dr. Rutgers, the author, expressed his expectation that the co-operation in 1950 would so far recover from the blows of the war, that pre-war figures of sales would return in reports for that year. This experience has come true.

For us in Indonesia, if we pause to reflect what effort it has meant for the Bible Societies involved in performing this, we can but feel deep gratitude. In fact, we are very much indebted to foreign Bible Societies for our Bible provision, and through these Societies to the people who have contributed.

The need of Scriptures in Indonesia and the responsibility for producing them are too great, the task has been far above the capacities of the Christian community in the country. Humanly speaking, it will be so for a good length of time in the future too. There are but two million Protestants out of the three million Christians, amidst a total population of 70 millions. A great many of these Protestants live in rural areas.

Nevertheless, the Council of Churches in its meeting recently passed a resolution by which Bible provision in Indonesia was acknowledged as a responsibility to be shouldered by Indonesian churches as well, however small the contribution may in fact be. It was realised that the churches in Indonesia would not be in a position to fulfil the task fully, and that a Bible Society of Indonesia would not start as a fully fledged Bible Society, encompassing all the aspects of Bible Society work.

When Baron van Tuyll van Serooskerken, the new General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, visited Djakarta in November last year, the

challenges and opportunities and problems were discussed and we succeeded in drawing up a scheme. The charter of incorporation of the new Society will be passed soon and by that time one more Society will have been added to the co-operating Bible Societies in Indonesia.

It is expected that the first task of the new Society will be in particular on the field of distribution, colportage, the organisation of local branches and promotion of membership. It will become a member of the Joint Bible Publication Fund as soon as possible.

So much may be said about the developments. Two aspects may be mentioned here to place the new Society in its particular setting of the moment. It seems that the shortage of Scriptures left as a leeway by the war is now being overcome. The need for Scriptures will soon be "normal," a factor which brings colportage again into focus. In fact, the churches are again beginning to plan or carry out evangelistic campaigns. Colportage demands that attention be given to the production of suitable material. Our experience with the illustrated Gospel of Luke, the "Good News," is too small yet to draw any conclusions but it is clear that in this matter, the Bible Societies' interest demands close co-operation with the Christian Literature Committee and the Council's department for literacy, as well as with the local churches. And we may enjoy cordial co-operation.

The struggle for freedom has aroused among the formerly rather apathetic masses an interest in world happenings and events. There has grown a hunger for literature. People who formerly only used the language of their area or the dialects, are seeking intercourse and are making use of the *lingua franca* : the Indonesian language.

The revision of the New Testament in this language was completed in 1938 and this revision—speaking generally—was accepted cordially. It is still a translation generally accepted. However, there are trends at the moment to coin new words and to embellish the speech with these new findings ; this is the normal growth of a living language. Nevertheless, for the great masses we need an Indonesian as simple as possible and using a limited vocabulary, with attractive editions of the Scriptures printed in it.

A second factor pressing in the same direction, is that of the literacy campaigns and the follow-up work. The Council's department for education is now preparing a tour in this country for Dr. Laubach.

There we are : a handful of Christians, financially relatively weak, endangered by a variety of secular forces and trends, but fighting to hold to the foundation once laid in love for mankind. I hope that the above will suffice for the moment to let the readers who are interested know the environment in which the cradle of the Indonesian Bible Society stands.

THE BIBLE IN SYRIA AND LEBANON

FOUAD E. ACCAD

The Political Situation

MANY contrary winds blowing across SYRIA during the past two years have made the political life of the country very unstable and have caused a succession of several coups d'état. After the success of the first coup d'état of Husni Zaim in March, 1949, forcing the ex-president of the Republic, Shukri Kawatly, to go into exile with his prime minister, Jamil Mardam Bey, the time came for Zaim not only to be put out of office, but also condemned to death with his prime minister, Al Barrazi ; both were executed. The statesman who succeeded Zaim was Sami El Hannaoui, president of the court

martial which condemned Zaim and Barrazi. El Hannaoui, in his turn, was overthrown and had to take to exile. He chose Beirut for his residence and was assasinated a few months ago in the street by a second cousin of Barrazi who had sworn to avenge his relative.

This third armed coup was carried out in December, 1950, by Colonel Chishakli and some of his companions who feared that the republican form of government might be taken away from them in the new national constitution which was being drawn up. After the success of their coup, Chishakli and his friends ceded their places in the first ranks of politics to a provisional cabinet under which the constituent assembly has been able to continue its work of drawing up the new constitution. The most touchy point of this constitution was religion. The Moslem Brotherhood, upheld by other fairly strong elements, wanted Islam to be declared the state religion. But this was strongly opposed by the young and progressionist elements of the country and especially by the dignitaries of the Christian clergy, in particular the Patriarchs of the eastern churches who threatened a mass exodus of the Christians from Syria if this was carried. After several weeks of debate, a compromise was found, declaring that Islam must be the religion of the head of state, and that the constitution and the laws of the country should be inspired by the " Fiqh," or Mohammedan jurisprudence.

A notable fact which should be mentioned, is that of the extention of the vote to Syrian women of a certain education, a fact that is without precedent in all the arab countries.

In Lebanon there have not been many changes. The president, Bechara El-Khoury, began his second term of office as president of the Republic on 21st September, 1949. During these past years there have been some ministerial changes in the cabinet, but Riad Solh has continued in power as prime minister, in spite of fairly powerful opposition. This has permitted a certain stability in the political life of the country. Unemployment, however, is at its height and several thousands of Lebanese are leaving the country each year for the Americas or for Africa. The Tapline (Trans-Arabian Pipe Line) on which many hopes had been built, as being an organisation which would absorb all, or at least most of the unemployed, did nothing of the sort, since almost all the work is done by American machines, perfected to the highest degree and calling for very little labour.

Economic relations between Syria and Lebanon are still severed and the customs' barriers between the two countries are becoming higher and higher. The value of the Syrian pound which had fallen below the level of the Lebanese pound has risen to this level again and has even been above it for some time.

The war which developed between Israel and the arab states after the withdrawal of the British troops and the establishment of the state of Israel, set hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees of arabic origin on the move. The state of these refugees is becoming more and more serious. Abandoning their towns and villages, their orange and banana groves, their shops and their different professions, their posts and their employment, they have come and installed themselves here by thousands in tents, in camps or even in caves. Others have found shelter in churches and mosques, in schools and monasteries and even in abandoned buildings of the towns and villages of the arab countries; there they stay, doing nothing, for lack of the opportunity of employment for them ; and they have to live with difficulty on the rations which are given to them by the United Nations, in the hope that one day the doors will open for them to return to their homes and jobs ; or that some just compensation will finally be paid to them for their property in Israel. There are more than 100,000 of these refugees in Lebanon and over 80,000 in Syria.

The Work of the Bible Societies

It was in 1820 that the British and Foreign Bible Society appointed its first secretary of the new agency in the Levant. A few years later, the American Bible Society also opened an agency in that part of the world, and as the work of each developed a certain amount of overlapping eventuated. This naturally involved some confusion and unnecessary expense. In view of this situation, Dr. North of the American Bible Society and the Rev. A. H. Wilkinson of the British and Foreign Bible Society visited the countries of the Near East to study the possibilities of co-ordinating the work. Eventually they formulated a plan for the creation of Joint Agencies, the main feature of which was that one Society would supervise the work of both Societies, but both Societies would continue to contribute to the work. In 1937, therefore, the first two Joint Agencies were established under the titles of Bible Lands Agency North and Bible Lands Agency South. The British and Foreign Bible Society became responsible for the supervision of the latter, while the former was placed under the supervision of the American Bible Society. As well as the Lebanon and Syria, the Agency in the North includes Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. This policy has proved effective in that overlapping has been eradicated and there has been a saving of staff. Since 1937 the Agency for Syria and Lebanon has been commonly known as " The Bible Society " and for nearly a year now the books have carried the imprint of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES.

One constant aim is to make the Protestant churches in Syria and Lebanon understand that the Church should take an active part in Bible distribution and these efforts are now beginning to meet with success. The Arabic-speaking churches are showing great interest in this respect now and the Armenian-speaking churches are doubling their efforts.

Towards the end of 1949, the need was felt for forming a local council which would, for the present, have the responsibility of advising the agents of the Bible Society concerning their work. It would also be able to watch the budget and the expenses of the Agency and give advice in this respect and, at the same time, it would be the organisation to help the Bible Society in its work of awakening members of various missions and churches to a sense of their responsibility in promoting the reading and distribution of the Scriptures and in helping forward the work of the Bible Society in Lebanon and Syria.

Thus, the "Advisory Council of the Bible Society in Syria and Lebanon " was constituted with twenty active members, under the chairmanship of the Rev. Farid Aoudi, President of the High Council of the Evangelical Community in Syria-Lebanon. These members belong to nearly all the Protestant churches in Syria and Lebanon. There are also two Greek Orthodox members who, however, are not official representatives of their church.

In other aspects also, effective collaboration between the Bible Society and the churches has been established, especially in Lebanon. In 1950, as always, Bible Sunday was well celebrated throughout the sub-agency. All the evangelical churches, large and small, Arab, Armenian and the various American and European missions contributed their share of help and interest. Once again this year, the sub-agent made use of this occasion for broadcasting for half an hour on the radio station of the Lebanese Republic a special message, which was afterwards published, in whole or in part, in several newspapers of the Republic. This time, however, Bible Sunday was also followed by three months of missionary offensive in which all the churches

and the missions were invited to mobilise their forces to distribute the Scriptures widely. The Bible Society provided the necessary books and gave a generous reduction on the books which they succeeded in selling in this way. The response to this appeal was most warm and almost 6,000 copies of Scripture, of which 1,100 were Bibles and 1,100 New Testaments, were distributed in 1950 by this means.

Also around Whitsuntide last year, the sub-agency had the privilege of taking part with the evangelical churches in Lebanon and with the " United Missionary Council" in a week of evangelistic campaign in the villages. This week was called the " Week of Witness " ; it also helped in the sale of several hundred copies of the precious Word of God and we hope that in time such campaigns, when the organisation has been improved from experience, will become more and more extensive and effective.

The relations between the employees of the Bible Society and all the churches which encourage the distribution of the Bible are most cordial. We have had the privilege of taking part with these churches, not only in evangelistic campaigns, as described above, but also in several conferences and retreats for the deepening of spiritual life, or for studying and analysing the difficulties with which we are faced. The results have been most profitable and will help us greatly in shaping the policy and activity of the Bible Society in Lebanon and Syria.

Special mention must also be made of the Bible movement in the Greek Orthodox Church. For a number of years now, several priests and laymen have always procured Scriptures and particularly New Testaments or separate Gospels for the scholars of their regular schools or Sunday schools. An effort on the part of laymen to undertake preaching missions in the churches of Beirut and the surrounding villages was also more or less crowned with success. In order to help the Movement of Greek Orthodox Youth, Archimandrite Lev Gillet of the Russian Orthodox Church in France, was attached to the Greek Orthodox See in Beirut. His ministry was blessed, although his stay was unfortunately of short duration, owing to difficulties between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and this youth movement which was opposed to certain dealings which it considers as abusive and tendencious in the heart of the Church. At the great " Bible Festival " which was under the high patronage of His Excellency, Cheikh Bechara El Khoury, President of the Lebanese Republic and presided over by His Excellency the Emir Raif Bellama, minister of national education, and was the occasion of the establishing of the Advisory Council of the Bible Society in Syria and Lebanon, there were amongst the speakers at this festival two members of the Greek Orthodox Church in Beirut : Professor Georges Baz and Archimandrite Ghofraïl Saleeby, secretary to the Bishop of Beirut, thus showing the interest which this church has in the work of the Bible Society.

The work of the Bible Society sub-agency is centred in our two main depots, the one in Beirut for the Lebanon and the other in Damascus for Syria. The latter was opened in 1949 and is certainly destined to increase in importance since the political and religious situation is going to make this depot more and more the centre of the work of the Bible Societies.

For the time being, our nine colporteurs, whose base is in Beirut, are active in both countries, but they meet with great difficulties each time they want to cross the frontier. Nevertheless, their sales amount, on the average to more than half our total annual circulation. For a while we have been sharing the running expenses of a Book-Mobile, or circulating bookshop, with

the American Mission in Lebanon. This has proved to be an excellent way of getting the Scriptures right into the most remote villages of the country. Unfortunately, owing to lack of funds, the Mission has had to cease this work and a missionary living in Tripoli now uses the Book-Mobile one or two days a week for visiting the villages round Tripoli. It would be good if this van could again be put to more use and we often try to think of ways which would make that possible.

A special missionary effort took place in 1949 and 1950 among the Palestinian refugees in the area of our sub-agency. To help in overcoming their state of despair and to bring them the consolation of God, His salvation and His peace, the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society took the initiative of distributing the Word of God in some 27,000 copies amongst those in Syria/Lebanon. This action was much appreciated and all the missions in the country supported it and shared actively in the distribution.

To crown the activities of the year 1950 for the sub-agency, we had the very precious and very much appreciated visit of the Rev. J. E. Fenn of the London Bible House.* Mr. Fenn gave us some details of the work of the "mother Society" in London, details which strengthened our vision of the great task which we are fulfilling together and which at the same time gave us food for prayer for a "House" which is so dear to us. We, in our turn, had great joy in showing Mr. Fenn the beauties of our sub-agency and as much as possible of the work which we are doing. Furthermore, several churches and missions, where Mr. Fenn was able to speak about the Bible and the work of the Bible Society were visibly blessed and strengthened. The large and active part which Mr. Fenn also took in the above-mentioned "Bible Festival" was very much appreciated by all and the results of this festival will, we are sure, have a very happy effect throughout the country.

These are some aspects of the activities which we have the privilege and the joy of being allowed to perform for our Lord and Master. Eternity alone will reveal the results in saved souls of whom we know so few now. To Him be the glory for having been willing to choose such feeble and imperfect instruments as ourselves to bring His divine message to a world which so badly needs it. May He find us faithfully at our posts at His coming.

THE BIBLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

RAYMOND R. GREGORY

THE six small republics and the British colony of Honduras comprise Central America. This area lies wholly within the tropics. It is a curving strip of land about thirty to three hundred miles in width and stretches over twelve hundred miles between Mexico and the republic of Colombia in South America. Taken together they are a little larger in area than France, and less than that of the State of Texas in the United States of America, but they have an importance to the United States and the world far greater than their size would indicate. Across this area has been constructed the Panama Canal which is one of the world's busiest sea lanes.

Rainbow Republics

Mr. Ralph Hancock in his recent book names this stretch of land "The Rainbow Republics" and says: "There is packed more native colour, more picturesque villages, more varieties of climate and more interest for the traveller than any other similar area in the world. The ruins of temples and

* See BULLETIN No. 5, J. Eric Fenn: Impressions of the Near East.

villages older than the Egyptian pyramids left their palm and mahogany plumed spires above the jungles more impenetrable and more mysterious than wild Africa.

" The descendants of the people who built and inhabited those forgotten cities, tilled the sugar, bananas and coffee plantations and helped build the railroads, highways and movie theatres of a civilization that came from across the sea centuries later. Oxcarts, and new Packard automobiles, gaudily costumed Indians and gaudier ' civilized ' upper-class natives—Europeans, and Americans ; one half million dollars worth of gold and silver bobbing up and down on the backs of mules, over the cobble stones of a narrow street, and the smiling freshly scrubbed faces of fiesta-bound peones boarding the plane for the capital. These and a thousand other extraordinary contrasts make the Central American republics the kaleidoscopic rainbow republics every American hopes one day to see."

The population of these six republics is about nine and a half millions. While there are more than two million aboriginal Indians and a scattering of negroes and pure-blooded Spanish, the great mass is of mixed Spanish and Indian blood called " *Ladinos*." Spanish is the prevailing language. Several Indian tribes retain their original dialects. As to religion, Roman Catholicism is the most widely professed ; other religious groups enjoy a wide latitude of freedom and are tolerated.

The modern evangelical movement in Central America dates back sixty years. Thirty years ago the movement was still weak, struggling and tentative ; to-day it is a growing force to be reckoned with. The open Book has come into its own and has reached a robust adolescence.

The historic Edinburgh Conference in 1910, gave scant attention to Latin America as a Mission field. At the beginning of this century Roman Catholics in the United States knew very little about the religious conditions in Latin America. They were content to regard the entire southern continent as loyal to the Church while anyone who suggested that the spiritual situation was serious, was regarded as a bigot. The vast majority of Protestants in North America were equally ignorant of the state of religion in Latin American countries and were utterly indifferent to evangelical effort south of the Rio Grande.

One of the greatest single tragedies in the history of Latin America has been that for almost 400 years, because of ecclesiastical influences, the Bible was never permitted to enter into the stream of life and thought of its people.

The year 1916, was an important one in the religious history of the western world. In February of that year there was held on the Isthmus of Panama a great Protestant gathering called " the Congress of Christian Work in Latin America." Representatives of North American Mission Boards carrying on work in Latin America met with missionaries and national evangelical workers. This historic assembly represented the first united approach of Evangelical Christianity to the religious situation in Latin America.

The early beginnings of the modern evangelical movement began in a terrible era when religious fanaticism and confusion were widespread. General Rufino Barrios, the great liberal leader of Guatemala, who fought for the union of Central American republics, had published a liberal constitution that was not yet a part of the conscience of the people. In 1881, in a visit to New York, he personally called at the office of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board and as a result the first foreign missionary for Spanish work arrived in Guatemala. Shortly afterwards, General Barrios was killed in battle fighting for the union of the Central American republics. Then reaction set in and the recently called missionary after two years stay, returned to his

homeland. Undismayed, the Presbyterian Mission Board sent another couple in 1887. About the same time Sr. Francisco Penzotti, one of the outstanding and intrepid colporteur-evangelists, arrived from South America to begin in earnest the distribution of Scriptures among the Spanish-speaking people. In 1892, the Central America Agency of the American Bible Society was established with headquarters in Guatemala City and Sr. Penzotti was appointed the first secretary, and continued until 1907.

One of the difficulties of the evangelical movement was the inability of the great majority of the people to read and write. The Bible was an unknown Book. A man with the Bible was a curiosity, a heretic and an enemy of the country. During those first years it was unsafe in many parts to work outside of the larger towns. Time and time again police protection was sought. Religious liberty was defined as " free to do as you were told ! " Like the early apostles, these missionaries faced rebuffs, stonings and prison bars. There were also other difficulties such as poor transportation facilities. There were no railroads from the ocean ports of the Central republics to their respective capitals ; no wagon or auto roads ; and no airplane service. The larger cities and towns lacked modern sewerage systems and the electrical age was still in its very infancy. Mail service was slow and delayed. There were many Indian dialects ; little knowledge of the customs of the people, a few friends and fellow-workers.

The Rev. G. O. Heath of the Moravian Church, Barbados, was appointed in 1890 by the British and Foreign Bible Society as agent for the West Indies Agency which included British Honduras, and Central America. Kingston, Jamaica, was the chief Bible depot for Central America, at least up to 1880. The last sub-agent was the Rev. W. K. Keech who resigned in 1912. For a short time the British Bible Society was represented in Nicaragua by a Mr. Veitch, and in Costa Rica by the Rev. T. H. Spence. In 1913, the British and Foreign Bible Society, by mutual agreement with the American Bible Society, withdrew from Central America, and the American Bible Society from Persia, and each Bible Society assumed the work of the other Society in that area. The British Bible Society, however, remained in British Honduras.

According to the April, 1896 issue of the Central American Mission Bulletin, the six Central American republics had a population of approximately 3,600,000 people. It states that the Presbyterian Church North had a mission in the capital of Guatemala. In Nicaragua, no mission work had been attempted except that of the Moravians to the Miskito Indians. In Honduras and Salvador there was no organised evangelical work but a missionary was on his way to the latter republic. In Costa Rica, there were four missionaries engaged in Spanish work, and three missionaries of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society among the English-speaking West Indians at various coastal points. The islands between the coast of northern Honduras and British Honduras had also several evangelical groups at work. Most of the population there was English-speaking.

In October, 1899, the Rev. R. H. Bender reported in the Central American Mission Bulletin, that : " One of the priests declared that the Bible and tracts were like ' pasteles ' (candy or pie), good for the mouth but bad for the digestion. Another priest ordered that all the Bibles without notes should be burned, and cursed those who retained them. Out of the fifty dollars worth sold, only two or three have been delivered. Those who have read the Bible will not give it up. The Seed awaits favourable time to germinate and produce wholesome fruit, because God is Light and where Christ reigns there can be no darkness."

One of the Quaker missionaries at Chiquimula, Guatemala, writes at the fore-part of the century : " The doors are open for selling the Word ; both Bible Societies lay the Word down at the different mission stations at remarkable low rates, in fact free, and the Book is cheap. There is immediate need of colporteurs to be on the road with Bibles. The Books are here. Where are the men to sell them ? " Referring to that same period, we quote from an article entitled ' How the Bible Works Here '—" With the exception of two missionaries in Guatamala City, every mission station is the result of the work of the colporteur and nearly all the national evangelists and pastors have been trained in Bible distribution."

A small pamphlet published by the American Baptist Home Missionary Society of New York gives the following under the caption : ' Preparation and Work '—" The American Bible Society and the British Bible Society have prepared the way for the missionary. These agents go from place to place selling Portions of the Scriptures and explaining the Gospel. Evangelical believers have been developed throughout the republics so that in many places there are little bands of people hungrily awaiting a Shepherd of souls." It is true as Dr. John A. Mackay states in his book entitled ' The Other America '—" The Bible was the pioneer of the Evangelical Movement in Latin America."

The Central American Indian and the Bible

There is perhaps no happier chapter in the story of the Evangelical Movement of Central America, than that which describes the progress made in bringing the Gospel to the more than two million Indians during the last thirty years. There is a rising tide to-day of interest in the more adequate Christian service to the Indians in Latin America.

Twenty-five years ago, the Guatemalan Indian was described by a statesman of his own land as a " victim of exploitation by the State, the Church, and capital. His history since the Spanish conquest has been an interminable calvary of slavery and abjection. Although liberal laws have freed him from industrial slavery, his religious, social and intellectual progress has not prepared him for his financial prosperity." Since 1930, the entire New Testament has been translated and published in the dialects of three of the large Indian groups—the Cakchiquels, the Mams and the Quichés. Encouraging progress is being made in further translation work among other groups of the same republic, as well as among the Valiente and San Blas Indians of Panama. Bible Institutes housed in substantial buildings have been established for each of the three groups that already have the New Testament in their own dialect, to prepare young men and women for religious leadership among their own people. We can only make mention of this most fascinating work among the Indians in this paper, as this phase of work requires a separate article.

At the completion of the Panama Canal, the Agency's headquarters was moved in 1916 from Guatemala City to Cristobal, Canal Zone. The Maryland Bible Society, an auxiliary of the American Bible Society, donated the funds to construct a Bible House similar to that of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Port Said, the entrance to the Suez Canal. There at Cristobal, on the Atlantic side, stands this building close to this famous waterway as a reminder that " *man does not live by bread alone.*"

The 1950 circulation of Scriptures marks the largest for the Agency since it was organized in 1892—fifty-eight years ago : 14,334 Bibles ; 20,173 New Testaments ; and 191,397 Portions, or a total of 225,904. Of these, the greater part were in the Spanish language.

The inhabitants of Central America had been for almost 400 years under the unchallenged influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible was an unknown Book to the masses until it was brought to them by Protestant colporteurs and missionaries. No one can say that the Bible is hid in Central America. Every night in many places, evangelical services are being held. Nowhere have we found the work static. Everywhere the missionaries are planning some kind of advance, or seeing the realization of some cherished dreams. The Evangelical Movement is on the march. Like any growing concern, difficult problems have to be faced, but there are more trained missionaries than ever for technical programmes coming to the field. One of the missionaries writes : " The Lord's blessing continues on the work here." The director of one of the active Mission groups says that evangelical campaigns could be carried on for years to come, without a let up, if funds and workers were available. For example : in 1891, the Central American Mission, the second Mission group to organize work among Spanish-speaking peoples, had one couple in Costa Rica. To-day, they have 139 missionaries throughout the six republics and some twelve are on the waiting list to be sent out.

" We have advanced " might well be the encouraging headline that marks the status of the work for the great majority of the mission groups in Central America. To-day, there are two large radio stations, one in Guatemala City and the other in San José, Costa Rica, each with an eight-hour-a-day programme, giving forth the Good News. There is an unparalleled activity, expansion, vision for greater things, and number of new missionaries under appointment. Vacation Bible Schools and child evangelism are reviving with new impetus. Medical service is being extended in behalf of the under-privileged, and literacy campaigns organized. All of these factors bring a challenge to the Bible Societies, so that the Book may become available and serve the multitudes as Guide and Light.

Because we have become so accustomed to the Bible, little do we realize, as one of the pioneer missionaries once said to the writer, that " it would be impossible to think of Sunday Schools, Bible Institutes, Evangelical Services, without the Bible. The Bible Society is the right arm of all missionary activity."

AN ENQUIRY ON THE BIBLE

FRANK MICHAËLI

IN the spring of 1950 we instigated an enquiry about the Bible through one of the best known Protestant weeklies in France, " *Le Christianisme au XXe Siècle* " and received about a hundred replies, coming from people of all walks of life. From these replies we have been able to draw several considerations and remarks which are no doubt of general application to all who love the Bible and are occupied with the distribution of the Scriptures.

The Bible in personal Life

One first group of questions dealt with the Bible in personal life. The majority of the replies showed that the reading of the New Testament is much more frequent than that of the Old Testament, except perhaps for the Psalms and some passages from the Prophets. Some books are hardly ever read, such as Leviticus, Numbers and the Books of the Chronicles. Nevertheless, it must be noted that some people say they are particularly fond of reading the Old Testament, because the New Testament is too familiar to them. The repetition of the stories of the Gospel from Sunday School days onward, brings with it the danger of diminishing the spiritual riches of their content.

One difficulty which is frequently mentioned with regard to the reading of the Bible is a lack of historical and theological knowledge on the part of the readers who do not therefore find it easy to understand the Word of God. However, the principle obstacle is also said to be human sin which refuses to understand what God says in the Bible. " The only difficulty," writes one person, " is to read too much with the eyes and not enough with the heart." That is also sufficient to explain why the material obstacles often seem so insurmountable : lack of time in particular. On the other hand, as another correspondent tells us, he who prays finds time to open his Bible ..... " I have come to realise that prayer should precede the reading of the Word of God and, read in the light from above, God illuminates and explains what He wants to say to us."

Methods of reading the Bible and the kind of helps used vary considerably: consecutive reading of the whole Bible, or of a certain book, Bible reading plans and notes, explanatory commentaries, study of the references, etc., etc.

The Bible in the Family

It was easy to see from the answers to this second part of the enquiry how the practice of family prayers is gradually disappearing : the reasons, alas, are numerous—lack of time, mixed marriages, the indifference of certain members of the family, diversity in the ages of the children, etc. Although many people accept this fact, many others regret it and think that family prayers should be restored to their place of honour, but adapted to our times : they should take the form of instruction, rather than exhortation, future parents should be taught in this respect and more use should be made of modern methods with children and of radio services.

The majority agree that the complete Bible should not be given to young children (under 12-13 years of age), but it would seem that, as far as parents and teachers are concerned, the matter is summed up by the following comment : " the teacher can make the Bible loved or hated." Thus it rests with the adults to make the young people love the Bible and what a clear responsibility that is ! Whatever may be the methods used (traditional or modern), whatever may be the groups formed (family, Sunday School, or youth group), the teachers should be competent and should, above all, love the Word of God and obey it in their own personal life.

The Bible in the Church

This leads us on to the third subject : the Bible in the Church. The replies to the questions asked in this section are sometimes severe on the pastors who are reproached for not preaching sufficiently biblical sermons, for " sermonising " rather than teaching, for not entering into the practical problems of life and for remaining in the distance of abstraction, for talking too much at Bible studies and thus preventing the members of the group from speaking—and many other complaints. There is an element of truth in all this, but there is perhaps also the error of identifying the pastor with the Church, whereas the Church is the company of the faithful and it is for the members of the Church to ask for what they want and to take a more active part in the life of the Church ! The preaching of the Bible and Bible study are at the centre of the life of every parish. All should meet together in order for these times around the Word of God to be more living, better attended, more effective.

The Bible in Evangelism

Such was the title of the fourth section, a subject of actuality in all countries. In answer to the question " Do you think that a Bible given for

the first time to an unbeliever would be understandable, ? " almost all reply in the negative. It is not denied that men have come to the faith through the reading of the Bible, but it is thought that many shut the Book again without understanding it and that there should therefore be some kind of guide or introduction to the reading of the Bible which would explain what the Bible is, how it can be read and understood. One would like Bibles of less antiquated appearance, clearly printed in the language of to-day which is understandable to all and preceded by explanatory notes or a practical introduction. Some people approve of the audacity and initiative of some colporteurs, of Bible stands at fairs and exhibitions and of Bible vans ; others fear to use these modern means of publicity which run the risk of profaning holy things. There is, of course, a manner of distributing Bibles automatically which is harmful to any spiritual work.

Many interesting and varied experiences are reported : unbelievers have been won, souls well disposed to the Gospel have been revolted by the reading of the wars and scandalous scenes of the Old Testament ; results and failures. In a word, the Spirit of God is at work everywhere, but not always in the way in which one would expect.

One factor should always be borne in mind ; it is expressed by one correspondent in this way : " The world needs holiness, not books. May the world learn through us to thirst and hunger after the God of Life and after His Word, and may we know how to lead men to this God, the ' Father of Lights ' . . . . . If people do not want to or cannot read the Bible, then we must be living Bibles for them and I am far from that ! "

The Bible is undoubtedly not just a worthless or useless book. Who would dare to suggest that ? But we understand by these somewhat severe words that our efforts to distribute the Bible and to make it known to the world will only be true if we ourselves are testimonies to the new life which God can create in us through Jesus Christ.

Notes on Contributors

THE RT. REV. BISHOP E. BERGGRAV : President of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES ; one of the six Presidents of the World Council of Churches.

THE REV. F. VISSER : Home Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society.

THE REV. DR. L. M. PÁKOZDY : Professor of Biblical Theology and General History of Religion at the Reformed Theological Faculty of the University of Debrecen (Hungary).

THE REV. W. J. BRADNOCK : Translations Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society ; member of the Editorial Board of " THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR."

MR. G. P. KHOUW : Secretary for the joint work in Indonesia of the Netherlands Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland.

MR. F. E. ACCAD : Sub-Agent for Syria-Lebanon of Bible Lands Agency, North.
THE REV. DR. R. R. GREGORY : American Bible Society Secretary for the Central America Agency.

THE REV. F. MICHAËLI : Professor in the Protestant Faculty of Theology, University of Paris; member of the Committee of the Bible Society of Paris and of the French Bible Committee.